

# Socialist fight

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**No French Tricolore in sight by Celtic supporters to sanitise the crimes of French imperialism against the peoples of South East Asia, the Middle East, North and Central Africa and the Caribbean, the millions killed, maimed and staved for the profits of their trans-national corporations; Well done the Bhoys and Ghirls!**

**The other, forgotten, Paris Massacre, a police slaughter of 200+ Algerians led by Nazi collaborator police chief Maurice Papon (1961).**



Unity is strength, L'union fait la force, Es la unidad fuerza, Η ενόπτητα σίναι δύναμη, اتحاد قدرت است, „doàn kết là sức mạnh, Jedność jest siła, yksej on kesto, ยูนิตี้คือ, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke, ਇੰਕਤਾ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹੈ, единстве наша сила, vienybēs jēga, bashkimi ben fuqine, ଯେବୁନ୍ଧମାନ, unità è la resistenza, 団結は力だ, A união faz a força, eining er styrkur, De eenheid is de sterkte, الوحدة هو القوة، Ní neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay kalakasan, jednota je síla, 일성은 이다 힘 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

# Socialist Fight Where We Stand (extracts)

Socialist Fight is a member of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International with the Liga Comunista of Brazil and the Tendencia Militante Bolchevique of Argentina.

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The following are some of the 21 points of the political programme of the Socialist Fight Group which can be found at our website here:

<http://socialistfight.com/>

1. We stand with Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (The International Workingmen's Association 1864, General Rules). The working class 'cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other sphere of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society' (Marx, A Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, 1843).

2. In the class struggle we shall fight to develop every struggle of the working class and oppressed in the direction of democratic workers' councils as the instruments of participatory democracy which must be the basis of the successful struggle for workers' power.

5. We fight for rank-and-file organisations in the trade unions within which we will fight for consciously revolutionary socialist leadership in line with Trotsky's Transitional Programme statement:

"Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian factions, it is no less so passively to tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ("progressive") bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution."

6. We totally oppose all economic nationalist campaigns like for 'British jobs for British workers' that means capitulation to national chauvinism and so to the political and economic interests of the ruling class itself. We are therefore unreservedly for a Socialist United States of Europe.

8. We fully support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of this reactionary Tory Government, in particular we stand for the repeal of all the anti-trade union laws and strongly opposed the new ones promised.

9. We are completely opposed to man-made climate change and the degradation of the biosphere which is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production for profits of transnational corporations. Ecological catastrophe is not 'as crucial as imperialism' but caused by

imperialism so to combat this threat we must redouble our efforts to forward the world revolution.

11. We also support the fight of all other specially oppressed including lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people and the disabled against discrimination in all its forms and their right to organise separately in that fight in society as a whole. In particular we defend their right to caucus inside trade unions and in working class political parties. While supporting the latter right, we do not always advocate its exercise as in some forms it can reinforce illusions in identity politics and obscure the need for class unity.

13. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence. It is a legitimate act of self-defence for the working class to 'No Platform' fascists but we never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers' organisations, as history has shown.

14. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price.

19. As socialists living in Britain we take our responsibilities to support the struggle against British imperialism's occupation of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland very seriously. For this reason we have assisted in founding the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group and we will campaign for political status these Irish prisoners of war and for a 32-county united Socialist Ireland. We reject 'two nations in Ireland' theories.

21. We are for the re-creation of a World Party of Socialist Revolution, a revolutionary international, based on the best traditions of the previous revolutionary internationals, critically understood, particularly the early Third and Fourth Internationals, with their determination to combat and overcome both reformism and centrism. It is by orienting to the ranks of workers in struggle, struggles against imperialism, struggles of oppressed minorities against varied all forms of social oppression, as well as political ferment among intellectual layers radicalised through these struggles, that we will lay the basis for regroupments with forces internationally breaking with reformism, centrism and various forms of radical populism/nationalism, and seeking to build a new revolutionary Marxist international party.

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## Editorial: The Syria war, the neocon attack on Corbyn and Labour democracy

The defiance of the Labour Party membership and its elected leadership by 66 Labour MPs, including about a third of the Shadow Cabinet, poses point-blank the question of working-class democracy, as the functional expression of independent working class politics, in the Labour Party.

The parliamentary vote took place in the context of the Cameron government's stated desire to extend its participation in the US imperialist military campaign against Islamic State (IS) from Iraq to Syria. This was obviously given enormous new ammunition by the atrocious killing of 130 people by IS supporters in Paris on 13 November. Another important precursor of British participation in the attack on IS was the failed attempt to put together a coalition to execute 'regime change' against Assad in 2013.

The ineptitude of the campaign against Islamic State, and the conspicuous failure of imperialist political will over Assad earlier, have given rise to suspicions on the left on both sides of a debate over Syria that there is some kind of ultra-subtle, Machiavellian imperialist policy that involves secretly supporting the side they consider the worst in this conflict.

Some on the left believe that the imperialists are secretly supporting IS, pointing to the failure to deal with the apparent complicity of Western allies such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey with allowing IS to evade the various imperialist blockades, etc. Others point to the failure of will in the US and UK in 2013 to argue that imperialism secretly supports the Assad regime against the 'Syrian revolution' – which has now been subsumed by bloody civil war between Islamist groups (including IS) and the Assad regime. The Russian intervention on Assad's side has rendered this more complicated and dangerous, and brings the possibility of conflict between the West and Russia in Syria – with the Turkish downing of a Russian jet underlining the dangers.

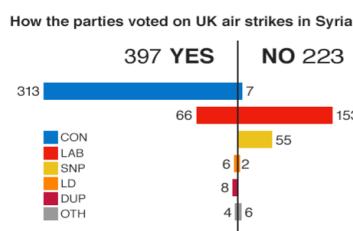
Despite some circumstantial evidence that gives some superficial plausibility to both theories, solid evidence is lacking for either of them. What

they do point to is a policy of the main imperialists that has collapsed into incoherence. Cameron's claim that there are 70,000 'moderate' fighters independent of both IS and the Assad regime, which was being torn apart even as the parliamentary debate took place, collapsed into a much-ridiculed delusion within a day or two. It is a good deal less plausible than Blair's 'weapons of mass destruction' from 2003. This war has a good deal less popular backing than Blair's Iraq war even as it begins. The incoherence is palpable.

The left should treat these rival theories with scepticism. The incoherence of imperialist policy in the Middle East does not flow from secret Western support for one of the West's two complementary demonised enemies: IS and Assad. Rather it flows from their relationship with Israel, the enormous influence of Zionism on Western politics, and the resulting policy of seeking the demolition of any force in the Arab/Muslim world that appears to be capable of challenging Israel's military power and shaky political strength in the region.

It was the demolition of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and then the exploitation of Sunni hostility toward Iran in the interest of Israeli domination which created IS. But in turn, IS is also now seen as a potential threat to Israeli regional omnipotence further down the line, with its bloody 'radicalism' and its regional spread even in Egypt, Libya and as far as Nigeria. So IS in turn has to be demolished. Though the demolition of other enemies in Syria is incomplete, and not for want of trying, they have not been able to destroy Iran. This policy, very different to the traditional imperialist policy elsewhere of cultivating conservative regional client states, is responsible for the incoherence. It is a situation that makes this concrete imperialist bloc, including Israel, very vulnerable to a political challenge. The neocons, the political promoters of this alliance and the chaotic imperialist project that derives from it, are aware of this and are desperately trying to head it off.

It was a real step forward for the workers' movement in the UK to see the mainstream of



25 MPs were either absent or did not vote on the main motion, including the Speaker and Deputy Speaker who do not vote by convention. Four tellers have not been counted in vote totals. SNP figure includes two members currently suspended from party.

In 2003 139 Labour MPs rebelled against war but 245 voted in favour. 15 Tory MPs voted against as did all 53 Liberal Democrat MPs (on the amendment for UN support only). The final vote was 412 to 149 votes. In 2015 the 245 Labour warmongers is down to 66. Class consciousness is rising.

Labour voting against an imperialist war proposal against the main parties of the ruling class in Britain, the Tories and the rump of the Liberal Democrats. The fact that Labour led the opposition to the war drive is diametrically opposite to the situation in 2003, and drew a class line. And to cap it all the result of the Oldham by-election, where Labour increased its share of the vote against the combined attack of the entire mass media and government and the racist Ukip playing the race card for all it was worth, showed Corbyn's appeal was not just to the Labour party membership but to the working class itself. Kelvin Mackenzie, eat your heart out.

The pro-war 'revolt' was not, as the Blairites and the reactionary pro-imperialist media would have it, a matter of mere dissent against the newly consolidating mainstream of Labour under Jeremy Corbyn. This was rather about sabotage, about the militarist right wing of Labour combining with Tories and other open enemies of the working class to frustrate the democratic mandate that Corbyn has from around 60% of Labour members.

Corbyn waited until the very last minute before allowing a free vote on the bombing of Syria. It

does appear that he was opposed to doing this, as he conspicuously did not endorse the positive view of free votes on questions of war put forward by John McDonnell. His hand appears to have been forced, probably by the existing whips making it clear that they would not implement a normal whip directive. He appears to have made a tactical retreat given the difficulty of sacking and replacing treacherous Chief Whip Rosie Winterton and maybe others in the middle of such a conflict with the Tories. Winterton abstained on the Syria vote, but this was purely tactical, as the Chief Whip openly voting for a war resolution that they ought to have been enforcing opposition to is the kind of treachery to invite a massive pro-sacking backlash from LP members.

The centrepiece of the right's defiance of Labour's membership was Hillary Benn's speech in the House of Commons, a Blair-cloned piece of demagogic that was clearly put together in collaboration with neoconservative and pro-Israel forces. In this regard, it is worth quoting two pieces of evidence: the first being Benn's remarks to the *Independent on Sunday* immediately after the Paris Massacre, when, in response to a question as to whether the British government should bring forward a resolution in favour of airstrikes on IS in Syria, he said:

"No. They have to come up with an overall plan, which they have not done. I think the focus for now is finding a peaceful solution to the civil war. The most useful contribution we can make is to support as a nation the peace talks that have started. That is the single most important thing we can do." (15 Nov)

So it is worth asking why Benn's line changed so much that by 2 December he was leading the charge against Corbyn in parliament, and being lauded for a 'Churchillian' speech by the neocon/right-wing media (though not by non-neocon right-wingers such as Peter Oborne).

One clue is to be found in another activity of Hillary Benn, a speech he made a couple of days later, on 17 November, at the Annual Lunch of the *Labour Friends of Israel*, where he pointed out his overarching priority in the Middle East:

"We are committed to supporting you to enable that work to continue. Our future relations must be built on cooperation and engagement, not isolation of Israel. We must take on those who seek to delegitimise the state of Israel or question its right to exist." (<http://www.lfi.org.uk/lfi-annual-lunch-2015-keynote-speech-by-guest-of-honour-rt-hon-hilary-benn-mp-shadow-foreign-secretary/>)

In that speech he made similar platitudes about seeking a negotiated peace in Syria. But it does appear that he got from somewhere his perverse 'courage' to defy the Labour membership on Syria two weeks later. It is not difficult to discern the likely source of the renewed determination of this figure to take on Corbyn and defy the Labour membership, nor the nature of the 'consultations' that produced it.

The ideological vilification of Labour under Corbyn's leadership continues unabated. One of the most significant, from the pro-war 'left', recently came from Nick Cohen in *The Guardian*, titled "Corbyn's 'new politics' means the self-righteous left wallows in its cruelty" where the neocon ideologue wrote that:

"... Corbyn has associated with the worst type of antisemites: Holocaust deniers, men who think Jews made bread from Christian blood or were behind the 9/11 atrocities. ... He keeps saying he's not a racist, but he's

happy to keep racist company. I cannot see how the left can attack Tory racism while he remains leader, although doubtless it will try." ([http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/05/jeremy-corbyn-new-politics-self-righteous-left-wallows-in-cruelty?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/05/jeremy-corbyn-new-politics-self-righteous-left-wallows-in-cruelty?CMP=share_btn_tw))

So here we have the ideological attack of the supporters of Israel's ethnic cleansing who are dominant in British society. This is also the meaning of Cameron's canard about 'the bunch of terrorist sympathisers' in Labour who oppose bombing Syria. It is importing Israeli-style mendacity and virulent anti-Arab and anti-Muslim chauvinism into Western society as a political weapon against the working class, utilising in this regard the principled but critical sometime associations of leading figures like Corbyn with militant elements, often themselves of Jewish origin, who evidence ideological confusion in the face of the magnitude of Israeli crimes against the indigenous Arab people of Palestine, and the role of Zionism as the hegemonic form of racism in Western societies today.

There are two practical points that need to be made over the current situation with the Syria/IS conflict, and Labour. One is that we must not let the left be sucked into political softness on any of the forces who are the targets of imperialism in the current conflict. The most obvious form of this is the fairly widespread softness on Assad, particularly among those, rather notably including George Galloway, who would like to see a joint Russian-Western bloc against IS. The other is any tendency to romanticise or show political softness on IS. This is less prevalent, but an element of this concept did creep into a Stop the War article on Syria recently. In response to Hillary Benn's bald equation of support for bombing IS with the internationalism of the 1930s left over the Spanish Civil War, the following was written:

"Benn does not even seem to realize that the jihadist movement that ultimately spawned Daesh is far closer to the spirit of internationalism and solidarity that drove the International Brigades than Cameron's bombing campaign – except that the international jihad takes the form of solidarity with oppressed Muslims rather than the working class or the socialist revolution." (<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://stopwar.org.uk/index.php/news/ground-hogday-as-uk-parliament-joins-syria-war-declaring-a-bogus-moral-purpose>)

The article, by Matt Carr, originally published on the Stop the War website, was removed in the face of an outcry from pro-war and/or bigoted anti-Muslim elements.

Despite this, the article is still wrong. The spirit of Jihadism is a reactionary-utopian response to imperialist barbarism. This is the kind of liberalism, driven by guilt at current (or past) oppression that actually leads the left to political softness not just on Jihadism, but ironically in other manifestations on Zionism and other forms of Jewish chauvinism.

The best that can be said about some forms of political Islam is that they are substitute forms of the nationalism of the oppressed. But they are not substitutes for proletarian internationalism: that can only be embraced consciously.

In fact, there has been a considerable witchhunt against Stop the War especially since the Syria vote, in reality aimed, as Tariq Ali pointed out in the *Independent* (11 Dec), at intensifying the campaign against Corbyn. STW has been denounced in a letter to the *Guardian* (9 Dec) by a coterie of soft

-lefts and ex-lefts headed by Peter Tatchell. The Green Party's Caroline Lucas MP has resigned from STW. These defections and attacks are over a variety of allegations including support for Assad and support for IS.

The coalition is very heterogeneous politically and includes a wide range of anti-war views; it is also cross-class and so it is hardly surprising that in the face of such a class-based witchhunt, elements who really represent left forms of bourgeois politics are inclined to walk away. While we do not support the political method of the leaders of Stop the War, it is still the main organisation in the UK that mobilises against the 'war on terror', so all socialists within and without Labour must rally to its defence against this reactionary, pro-imperialist campaign.

While opposing all political softness on the likes of Assad and IS, and condemning all atrocities committed by them, such as the Paris attacks or Assad's use of 'barrel-bombs' in Syria, the left should also defend any of them targeted by imperialism in Syria, and support their resistance. Thus we are defencist towards Assad and IS insofar as they are attacked by the West, and defeatist towards our 'own' imperialists.

We continue to insist that US-dominated global imperialism is the main enemy of the whole of humanity. Its game plan is still that affirmed in that infamous interview a few weeks after 9/11 (2001) with General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO during the 1999 war on Yugoslavia, says it all:

"I just got this down from upstairs"- meaning the Secretary of Defense's office - "today. This is a memo that describes how we're going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran."

And after that the targets are Russia and China for regime change and break-up. Along the way a few problems have arisen. One of the Jihadist groups initially supported by the US, IS, has itself become a major obstacle and so must be removed to get at Assad and Iran.

And to conclude, we demand as the domestic reflection of our anti-imperialism abroad, workers' democracy in the Labour Party and the labour movement at home. The Labour membership who voted for Corbyn as part of a working class revolt against neo-liberalism, must hold the pro-war traitors within Labour to account. We also demand 'free votes': of the Labour membership to determine the future and deselect those reactionaries who allied with the Tories to do Labour down.

Anyone hearing the current howls against the spectre of 'reselection' would conclude it is some kind of terrible imposition against democracy. In fact, reselection, the elementary proposition that no one is able to stand for the Labour Party without being regularly scrutinised and accountable to the membership of the party in the locality they are marked to represent, is nothing of the sort.

It is a basic democratic demand. Unfortunately even Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, not to mention the leadership of Momentum, have bowed to the outcry against this and distanced themselves from it in the name of party unity.

But real, principled unity depends upon working class democracy. We need a struggle to extend that within Labour. All candidates for elected office in Labour should therefore face regular re-selection and re-election as a matter of principle. ▲

# Deselect Labour Councillors who make Cuts and Labour MPs who Vote for War

By Steve Forrest Harrow West CLP and GMB union 28-11-15

**O**n the night of the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 RAF Tornado Jets carried out their first air strikes against Daesh targets in Syria. The Tornados hit the Deash controlled oil fields of Omar in Eastern Syria and were reported as "successful". This bombing campaign was made possible by the vote earlier that evening in the House of Commons where David Cameron received a majority of 174 over all other Parties. Effectively Parliament authorised the British PM Cameron to go and play war games with the Americans.

Cameron's majority was massively bolstered and strengthened by the treacherous betrayal of 66 Labour MPs. This is the reality of the Labour MPs betrayal is that they either consciously or otherwise strengthened the hand of imperialism.

This is not the place to deal with issues of Syria and the imperialists but rather of the Labour MPs themselves. There are now 66 pro imperialist openly Blairite MPs that have exposed themselves as such. But these MPs no longer inhabit a world where they are protected by the Westminster bubble and the Blair/Mandelson machine.

During the summer there has been a seismic shift in the Labour Party and the case of Harrow West is a microcosm of the national picture. This CLP is very relevant as Gareth Thomas MP for Harrow West signalled clearly his position within the Party as he lined up in the lobby behind Cameron and the Tories rush to war.

The Labour Party in Thomas's constituency as elsewhere has seen a massive increase as a result of the mood around Corbyn's campaign developed and the message of anti austerity and anti imperialism. The membership rose from approximately 400 to close to 1000 members, including supporters not yet converted to full membership.

During the summer itself there was a group set up called Harrow for Corbyn which from nothing grew to a group that was meeting weekly with over 30/40 in attendance. Such is the untapped thirst for ideas and the yearning for a struggle against austerity. This group was largely made up of new people to the struggle, young workers, students, women activists, trade unionists.

This group had wide ranging political discussions across all the issues in Jeremy's campaign and these activists have begun to get active in the Labour Party. Despite all the years of the ultra lefts waving their little flags saying that the Labour Party was now a bourgeois Party and join them, the opposite as was always understood by Marxists has now proved to be true. Thankfully the working class didn't hear or didn't agree with the ultra left and have rejoined their Party largely to reclaim it.

In Harrow as of course sadly elsewhere the Labour council has decided its best approach to the Cameron/Osborne austerity drive is not to launch a fight back but to carry out the cuts more pleasantly than the Tories.

But in the end it amounts to a Labour council carrying out Tory cuts. There is a deep anger amongst the new members or those older members energised by the mood around Corbyn within the Party towards the cuts and the lack of a fightback.

There is placed in front of us a council carrying out Tory cuts and a Labour MP voting with the Tories to support and strengthen their imperialist adventures. It is the responsibility of socialists within the Party to ensure that this challenge is met head on. The mood exists for a fightback as can be seen from the events of the summer.

There needs to be a mass campaign of deselection of those councillors who have carried out Tory cuts. Those councillors will be up for reselection in the next cycle and we need to ensure that we have socialists that are prepared to fight the cuts.

That should be and will be a pre requisite of selection. This can only be done by building the wards and the active base of the Party. If the anti austerity mood around Corbyn has provided the tools then a root and branch transformation is the only way to reclaim the Labour party for socialism.

The current MP who was elected in 1997 and served Blair and Brown loyally at ministerial level has with his vote for war in Syria alongside it must be added abstaining on the welfare bill has dismayed and angered many local Party members. The two added together mean that many feel that he has gone beyond the pale of what is expected of a Labour MP fundamentally, but most particularly in this Labour Party led by Corbyn who set a clear line that was broken.

We raise the issue of deselection and we are informed that its not a pleasant way to go about your business. Tell that to the Syrians who will die as 'collateral damage' as a result of this vote cast in Parliament. We are informed that its not possible tell that to the late Bob Wareing who was deselected in a coup organised by the Blairite machine and replaced with Stephen Twigg.

It is a most necessary task and as the Blairites themselves demonstrated eminently achievable. As socialists these are the tasks that are ahead of us and we must rise to finally reclaim that Party for socialism. It would be greatly assisted if the words of Corbyn and Clive Lewis in the run up to the Syrian war vote of threats to the MP's futures for those who voted for the government, were backed up by action. ▲

## Right wing Labour traitors who voted for war:

Adrian Bailey (West Bromwich West)	(Harrow West)	(Liverpool, Wavertree)
Alan Campbell (Tynemouth)	Geoffrey Robinson (Coventry North West)	Lucy Powell (Manchester Central)
Alan Johnson (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle)	George Howarth (Knowsley)	Margaret Beckett (Derby South)
Alison McGovern (Wirral South)	Gisela Stuart (Birmingham, Edgbaston)	Margaret Hodge (Barking)
Angela Eagle (Wallasey)	Gloria De Piero (Ashfield)	Maria Eagle (Garston and Halewood)
Angela Smith (Penistone and Stocksbridge)	Graham Jones (Hyndburn)	Mary Creagh (Wakefield)
Ann Coffey (Stockport)	Harnet Harman (Camberwell and Peckham)	Michael Dugher (Barnsley East)
Anna Turley (Redcar)	Heidi Alexander (Lewisham East)	Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark)
Ben Bradshaw (Exeter)	Jenny Chapman (Penistone and Stocksbridge)	Pat McFadden (Wolverhampton South East)
Bridget Phillipson (Houghton and Sunderland South)	Hilary Benn (Leeds Central)	Peter Kyle (Hove)
Caroline Flint (Don Valley)	Holly Lynch (Halifax)	Phil Wilson (Sedgefield)
Chris Bryant (Rhondda)	Ian Austin (Dudley North)	Ruth Smeeth (Stoke-on-Trent North)
Chris Leslie (Nottingham East)	Jamie Reed (Copeland)	Simon Danczuk (Rochdale)
Chuka Umunna (St Helens North)	Jenny Chapman (Darlington)	Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden)
Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central)	Jim Dowd (Lewisham West and Penge)	Stella Creasy (Walthamstow)
Emma Reynolds (Wolverhampton North East)	Jim Fitzpatrick (Poplar and Limehouse)	Stephen Doughty (Cardiff South and Penarth)
Frank Field (Birkenhead)	Joan Ryan (Enfield North)	Susan Elan Jones (Clwyd South)
Gareth Thomas	John Spellar (Warley)	Tom Blenkinsop (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland)
	John Woodcock (Barrow and Furness)	Keith Vaz (Leicester East)
	Kevin Barron (Rother Valley)	Kevan Jones (North Durham)
	Liz Kendall (Leicester West)	Louise Ellman (Liverpool, Riverside)
	Stephen Twigg (Gedling)	Wayne David (Caerphilly)
		Yvette Cooper



Bob Wareing, left wing MP deselected in favour of Stephen Twigg, right wing Blairite MP by the "New Labour Mafia".

Bob Wareing has represented West Derby for 24 years but was deselected in 2007 by what he called the "New Labour Mafia".

He said: "The Party leadership (under Blair and Brown) have regarded me as a thorn in their side as I rebelled against their betrayal of the basic principles of the Labour Party... Anti-Labour policies, such as privatisation, tuition

and top-up fees for students and the stock transfer of council houses (with the threat that no repairs would be carried out if they remained under council control) forced tenants to concede to New Labour's wishes. Worst of all has been the disaster of the invasion of Iraq, an illegal war in defiance of the United Nations. I was proud to march, with nearly two million others, against that policy."

## The New Mass Movement for the Labour Left?—strengths and weaknesses **By Tony Fox**

**T**he rise of Momentum has alarmed the whole capitalist establishment in Britain, including the right in the Labour party. Already highly alarmed by the election of Jeremy Corbyn on 12 September and the emergence of the two closely related issues that inspired that movement of a quarter of a million votes: anti-austerity and anti-war (dealt with in the Editorial). Every scribe from the hacks of the BBC and ITV and Shy to *The Sun*, *The Telegraph* to the liberal *Guardian* and *Independent* have sought to blunt this movement, to disorient it and to force retreats on these two vital issues for the survival of British capitalism itself.

Every pro-capitalist political party and group including those within the Labour party were likewise straining every effort to defend capitalism. We will use the term 'Defenders' for all defenders of the British capitalist establishment, with apologies to comic characters and the 17th century Irish rebel group of the same name.

The main concern now for the Defenders is to stop the working class ACTING on its growing leftist political convictions. And they are further rightly alarmed by the result of the Oldham by election – Labour increased its share of the vote despite their concerted efforts meaning that the working class itself was now following the lead of the Labour left; Corbyn was not 'unelectable' at all.

If the working class and poor now begin to rebel on austerity in a serious way the only source of funds to maintain the capitalist state intuitions are the rich and powerful themselves. The obvious injustice of the huge increase in inequality in the midst of an 'austerity' crisis was demonstrated in August 2015 when we learned that the number of millionaires in the UK has increased by 41% over the last five years and, according to the Barclays UK Prosperity Map, there are now 715,000 millionaires living in Britain compared to 508,000 in 2010.

And still the pathetically weak Labour leader Ed Miliband (still too left wing anyone?) refused to promise anything more than austerity-light and only the mildest of incursion into the privileges of the super-rich. He lost the election because of that and no other reason; he was still in agreement that the working class and poor had to bear the major burden of the crisis not of their making.

But still Labour Councils continue to enforce the Tory cuts without a fightback. Brent Council Leader Mo Butt complains that "from 2010 to 2017 our budget will have been cut by 75%". And he explains that he will continue to make all these cuts although "the council are being tight-lipped on where the cuts will be made".

It has to make £95 Million cuts in the next four years and there is absolutely no proposal from Mo Butt of any resistance whatsoever. It is the typical story across Britain- "what can we do?"

And balanced budgets are the strategy for Labour councils with the agreement of the Labour leadership. But Lewisham Momentum has different ideas. *The Guardian* reported on 12 November:

"In a move that could be copied in other constituencies, the Lewisham for Corbyn – Momentum group, a part of the mass movement that grew out of Corbyn's leadership campaign, agreed to protest against

its Labour council's proposals to close libraries and community centres. The group is also "initiating and collecting signatures on an official petition across Lewisham for a no cuts budget, trying to collect the necessary 8,000 to trigger a debate in the council".

The group wants to mobilise support also for a lobby of Labour's local mayor, Sir Steve Bullock, and his cabinet. The decision is only a local one but other Labour councils could find themselves coming under more pressure from Momentum groups to resist the government's demands for further deep cuts to public spending as they draw up their budgets for next year."

In another grass roots development Camden Momentum is a group of local activists allied with the housing activist group Camden Mothership. They had occupied council offices at 156 West End Lane that had remained empty for 3 years.

There should not be a housing crisis, asserted one of the group, there were enough empty properties to house all the homelessness and their intention was to occupy these properties to highlight this injustice. The meeting was addressed by Piers Corbyn and George Galloway and the housing crisis was discussed in detail, including the abolition of the right to buy. But it was the determination of the young Mothership activists, many of whom were immigrants, that inspired, the fact that two Labour councillors had visited and demonstrated their support was very significant. The occupation was ended peacefully the following day when the Council enforced a court order and refused to discuss with the occupiers. But as one of their supporters wrote online

"This is just a beginning of the housing protest of how the housing campaign is going to grow until we end homelessness and open up all the council's empty buildings for the community."

### Momentum and Democracy

Momentum has as yet no individual membership structures but has 95 branches. The BBC tells us:

"within the next six months, a permanent democratic structure is planned, with a handful of paid staff, and elected local and national bodies. Anyone holding a formal position within Momentum will have to be a Labour member, but ordinary members won't have to join the Labour Party. Organisers hope to attract funding streams from crowd-sourcing, Trade Union support and voluntary direct debits from supporters."

**Camden Mothership:** "This is just a beginning of the housing protest of how the housing campaign is going to grow until we end homelessness and open up all the council's empty buildings for the community."



Jon Lansman is the founder and central leader and obviously has determined the structures of the organisation before any founding conference, such matters are just not up for debate. Again issues like deselection are decried as propaganda against Corbyn who has assured us he is not for it.

Why can he not say that who should be the Labour candidate is a matter for Labour members in their local Constituency Labour parties; it is up to them to decide? Why must every Momentum leader decide that 'unity' entails putting up with Blairite right wing Labour traitors?

There is also controversial on who can join and at what level non-Labour members can participate. According to a BBC report on 8 December following complaints from Labour right wingers like Tom Watson and Caroline Flint:

"Momentum supporters who are not Labour Party members will not be allowed to vote or take part in meetings about the Labour Party. The move is designed to restrict the influence of organisations like the Communist Party, Left Unity, the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Party and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. The new rules are due to be finalised shortly, BBC assistant political editor Norman Smith said."

Momentum members would like to know by whom these new rules will be "finalised shortly" and why is a BBC functionary called Norman Smith party to these rule changes that have never been submitted to any body or group? Is this just Jon Lansman deciding on what goes on? If the momentum gained by the election of Jeremy Corbyn is to be maintained the structures of the Labour party must be democratised.

If that is to be accomplished by Momentum it itself must have open and democratic structures. And rules cannot be 'finalised' in any democratic body other than by an open vote in a full or appropriately delegated conference of its entire membership. And that include housing activists like Camden Mothership and all others who accept the democratic structures that a founding conference should decide upon. There are enough Defenders already ▲

# Support the Junior Doctors' Fight for NHS - but where are UNISON leaders and other trade unions?

By Graham Durham, Brent Central CLP, Unite the Union shop steward (personal capacity) 28-11-15

Strike action was suspended, temporarily, on 30 November following an outline agreement brokered by the conciliation service Acas. The BMA has until 13 January to start industrial action if the next round of talks does not reach a permanent deal.

**O**n 29 November, flash mobs of junior doctors were out on public transport singing up the public to 'NHS needs saving, help us stop the break-up'. In clear terms this action demonstrated that, despite the Tory government claims, the junior doctors' dispute is about the Tory break-up of the NHS and not simply about money.

Correctly the junior doctors, especially the 35,000 in the BMA who voted 98% in a ballot for withdrawing all but emergency care on 1 December and a full stoppage on 8 December and 16 December, have identified numerous threats to the NHS which stem from the Tory government.

Of course as most of the junior doctors start earning at £23k and do the overwhelming bulk of work in the NHS, reduced overtime payments are an attempt by Jeremy Hunt and the Tories to make NHS workers' pay for the unnecessary austerity programme. Junior doctors are right to stand up for their conditions and everyone must show public support for their action. In the Autumn Tory Budget announced on 25 November, George Osborne imposed a four year 1% pay freeze on all public service workers, including all NHS workers. The fall in real pay over the last four years is to be repeated hitting everyone from therapists to nurses and care assistants.

Here is a golden opportunity for all NHS staff to fight together against the Tories and ensure the NHS is saved. Instead the major union in health, UNISON, has done nothing about the pay cut to their members. John Burgess, the candidate of the left in UNISON in the current election for General Secretary, has correctly raised the issue of joint strike action but not a peep in response from Dave Prentis, current right-wing incumbent.

Junior doctors' action is pinpointing the chronic crisis of staffing in the NHS, over 3,000 doctors have sought an overseas certificate from the BMA in recent weeks in case Cameron, Osborne and Hunt seek to impose a settlement. Any exodus on this scale would lead to massive holes in NHS services, yet in the autumn announcement Osborne has withdrawn bursaries to student nurses, which will mean a further crisis in new nurses and further dependence on agency staff.

The Tories are furious that, despite the Health and Social Care Act 2012, progress on privatising services is slow. Although £6.5bn is now spent annually by NHS services in the private sector, this proportion has grown slowly since 2012 and commissioners are showing limited appetite for choosing the private sector.

Frustrated, the Tories are seeking to wreck the NHS through a process of slow decline in standards of care and service. Despite the trumpeting of a further £3bn winter injection of funds, even the NHS senior managers appointed by the Tories were quick to point



Benedict Cooper, "To save the NHS, Labour must face the ugly truth of PFI debts."

out that this will barely keep the NHS functioning at current reduced levels whilst a crisis of funding continues.

Independent bodies such as the Health Foundation point out that the NHS is already underfunded at a spend of 9.3% of GDP compared to a 9.9% EC average spend. During the period 2010-2015, the UK population grew by 3% but no increase was allocated to the NHS.

And the details of the PFI schemes are horrendous. Labour should be clear that it has no intention of honouring expensive PFI repayments and ripping off the NHS. Benedict Cooper, writing in *The New Statesman* in July 2014 tells the sorry tale of the NHS under Blair and Brown:

The NHS is riddled with extortionate debt from decades of misguided PFI deals. NHS hospitals owe £80bn in PFI loan unitary charges, in other words, the ongoing costs of maintaining PFI hospitals and paying back the loans. Next year alone, trusts will make some £2bn in repayments. Trusts like Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Trust, which is locked into making £40m in repayments a year on the PFI it took for Peterborough City Hospital, or Sherwood Forest

NHS Trust, which is spending 15% of its annual budget on the annual repayments on a PFI loan it took to expand the King's Mill Hospital, and so on.

But there are plenty who do gain. The initial investment made by PFI companies is paid back in spades. As Joel Benjamin of Move Your Money points out: "Typically the unitary charge is three to five times the capital cost, and on more egregious PFI projects as high as seven times".

The even uglier reality is that the New Labour era was a golden age for the PFI. The modern PFI is the child of John Major's Conservative government, but it was adopted and thrived under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Between 1997 and 2008, 90 per cent of all hospital construction funding was under PFI agreements, which paid for 75 per cent of all hospitals built.

The only positive, of course, is that 101 new hospitals were delivered in this time. New Labour invested heavily in the NHS, even if it did bring in some marketisation at the same time. Unlike this government, which has replaced marketisation with full-blown privatisation, and effectively cut budgets, especially for those with PFI debts, whose repayment rates are tacked to inflation.

Benedict Cooper, *New Statesman*, *To save the NHS, Labour must face the ugly truth of PFI debts*, <http://www.newstatesman.com/staggers/2014/07/save-nhs-labour-must-face-ugly-truth-pfi>

The NHS is not safe in the Tories hands and junior doctors are leading the fightback to save it. As well as all trade unionists and Labour Party activists offering support, we must demand that UNISON and other trade union leaders join the fight to save the NHS now. This must be the beginning of a fight for a fully integrated and truly socialist health care system where the drug companies and equipment suppliers are nationalised without compensation and the system is run for need and not profit by committees of the workers in the hospital and healthcare unions, patients and community groups. ▲

## Brian McNeil (Lynam)

Socialist Fight extends our sincerest sympathies to Marie Lynam on the death of her husband and long time comrade in the Fourth International (Posadist), Brian McNeil. We are aware of their long history together of industrial militancy and political struggle from the Vauxhall car factory in Luton to London. Marie told me that when they were married Brian's name was Lynam but he had to change it to "fox the blacklist" by the car companies. She remained Lynam and when she went for a job at the car factory she was turned down because the name was on the blacklist! Such lives are an inspiration to the new generation now being drawn into political struggle by the election of Jeremy Corbyn.

### We reprint the following tribute from Comrade Robin:

I never really saw Brian at work without his illness but I have heard in the past some stories from Marie and shared some moments with Brian when more lucid; I hope Marie or other comrades will share some more about him, his writing and work, for those of us who may not be able to make the events to commemorate him in person.

I know he made a generous donation to the Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group and it in turn was a welcoming and comradely space for him to come for however long he could attend on a given week. There were always straws in our box for him, and always someone who would be up from their seat immediately as he got up to help him walk, open the door and contact Marie.

I think the last time I saw Brian actually, was in the passage between Waterloo and The BFI; he had navigated the tube all got there, in a long coat but no trousers, absolutely resolved to continue his passion for film.

A young, cheerful worker at a burger stand had come off shift to help walk Brian back to the station where I bumped into them. We got a taxi back to Kilburn (I was briefly in paid employment), and maybe the conversation will come back to me but it was political and current, testament to a man who had not relinquished his concern for the future of humanity even as his life was coming apart.

Likewise, it is typical of Marie, to concern herself with the shape and health of the movement while addressing these last rites for her life companion and her own process of grieving.

And I agree with her. I've not been in the UK for the arrival of Momentum on the scene, and while it may well prove to be a good thing, I still have seen no evidence of its democratic structures. I'm not saying at all that the LRC was a lively or even effective vehicle, but it did establish policy and some democratic norms and perspectives.

In solidarity Robin

## Eulogy to Brian McNeil (Lynam)

By Marie Lynham

Brian died on Monday 16 November 2015 at the age of 82. Brian has been a fighter against capitalist exploitation and oppression all his mature life. He gave courage to countless people, in Britain and abroad, through his political involvement for the Marxist and revolutionary transformation of the Labour and Communist movement.

He knew that the future is in human hands. He showed how to organize life so that it should serve the triumph of social justice and equality.

Brian was abandoned at birth. He was brought up by strangers who had known his mother Madeline Lynam. Brian's birth was registered in Portsmouth on the 10.11.1933 by Madeline. He was named Brian Anthony James Lynam.

His adoptive parents, Lillie and Harry Diamond of Portsmouth had known Madeline. Lillie seemed to have been a clever but uppity person. Harry was a choleric man who liked to beat Brian with his belt.

Brian was very unruly and rebellious. He learnt quickly but did not concentrate. He was evacuated to Winchester at the age of 6, and then again elsewhere at the age of 9. He formed no deep attachment either there, or with Lillie and Harry.

At the age of 16, he joined the navy; was sent to Singapore and Malaysia in search and rescue missions. There, he learnt about the Chinese Revolution, became a Maoist. He was court-martialled for insubordination and dismissed from the army.

On his return to London, he married a gypsy lady and started work at Cable and Wireless. In 1956, Brian joined the Paddington Labour Party, then became associated with the Internationalist Group and then joined the Trotskyist Posadist IV International in 1961-62. As Brian's wife objected to his views, they eventually separated and Brian went to work as a miner at the Gelgigging-Cotgrave pit in Nottinghamshire. There, he joined the NUM. He stayed there two years.

Around 1966, Brian moved to Birmingham and started work as an unskilled worker at the Longbridge Austin car plant. He joined the AEUW and, with others, demanded that the profits of automation should go to the workers. This kind of thing got him the sack and, in 1968-69, he moved to Bedfordshire, to work for the Luton Vauxhall car plant.

In Luton, he joined the NUVB and started editing *The United Car Worker*, a small publication that won him the enmity of the trade union bureaucracy. His aim was to have the skilled and unskilled fighting together for their rights, and eventually the end of all grades through automatic skilling for everyone.

Sacked again, and blacklisted, Brian changed his name to become Brian A McNeil, but he continued being sacked all the same. He married Marie Moreau in 1969, found employment on the railways and they both moved to London.

In London, Brian joined the NUR. After several years, he became chairman of the North London NUR district Council. He can be seen on one of the pictures with Jimmy Knapp. With the rest of his Union comrades, which included Pete Firmin, he fought for the railways to become part of a more fully integrated national transport service.

Brian had no children from his first marriage, and none with Marie either. So he adopted Isabel, his friend's child, as his god-daughter.



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**Marie and Brian (beneath the flag) with supporters from the New Communist Party and others at the launch of *Revolutionary State and Transition to Socialism* by Juan Posadas in the Marx Memorial Library last May.**

Educated people in the navy had taken an interest in Brian. There, he had come across Beethoven for instance, many novels and Shakespeare. He was an avid reader. With his fine memory, which he never lost, he acquired a remarkable fund of general knowledge. He loved music, cinema and theatre. The organization of J Posadas he was in, along with Marie, was deeply concerned with science, education and culture.

In 1990 Brian got a 2-1 degree in English at the University of Westminster. As his year abroad was in Argentina, he wrote his dissertation in Spanish on the question of the Argentinian Trade Unions. He travelled to Bolivia, and then went to Chile to visit friends who he had met in London when they were refugees from Pinochet. He tried an MA after that, but was stopped by growing symptoms of manic-depression.

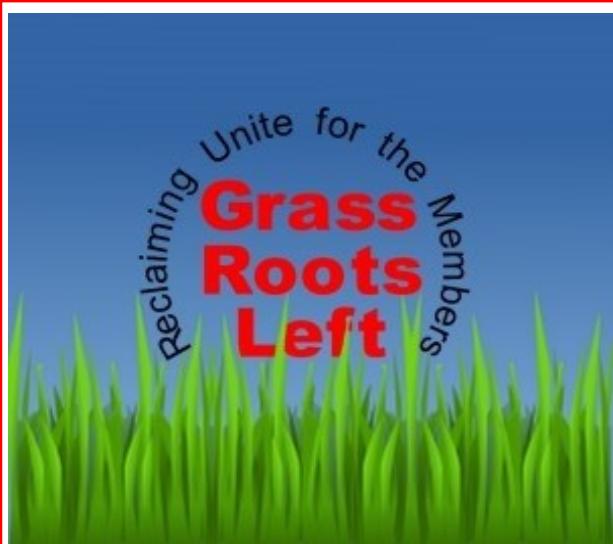
In 2001, Brian found some way of tracing his mother, Madeline Lynam, but she had died in the 1970s. Brian learnt that she had married and had a boy, but this half-brother had died young. Today, Brian has an elderly cousin (Frank) in Park Royal, an aunt in Petersfield (Hants) and distant relatives in Swansea. His mother Madeline is buried in the Swansea cemetery, and Brian went to visit her grave by train in 2014 for the last time, although he was barely able to walk.

Brian found that his grand father, Madeline's dad, had been Henry Patrick Lynam, born in Dublin in 1871 and died in Waterford in 1910. In Waterford, he had joined the *United Irish League*, and had become editor of the *Waterford Star*. Cousin Frank has many pictures of the Lynam ancestors.

Sturdy in his health throughout his mature life, Brian was diagnosed with manic depression at the age of 68. This illness became fairly well controlled by cocktails of medications, but Brian then developed Parkinson symptoms. At the age of 71, Brian could no longer eat by himself. He was less and less able to walk but he fought bravely to continue to be involved in the struggle of the working class and contribute ideas to it.

Brian insisted in keeping himself informed to the last. He read the headlines of the *Morning Star* until almost the end. He died after several weeks in hospital from the last stages of Parkinson.

**Brian taught Marie that life has meaning through the use one makes of it on behalf of human progress. His life goes on in the struggle of all the others who continue the fight for social justice and equality. In that sense, no comrade is ever really dead. Forward! ▲**



## McCluskey stabs the fight against the Trade Union Bill in the back!

Comment by Gerry Downing, Secretary Grass Roots Left (personal capacity)

The forces lined up against Jeremy Corbyn are a combination of mass media, Tory, TU bureaucrats and right Labour. Of course bourgeois society as a whole attacked him in alliance with the Blairites and other right as soon as he was elected. But what of the trade union leaders? On Sunday 27 September the Trident vote was blocked at the Labour party conference. On Monday *The Morning Star* (MS) headlined 'Dismay as Trident vote is blocked' and informed us that "the opposition of two major trade unions led to fears that an anti-nuclear motion would be lost". The unions and their leaders were unnamed.

A double page spread in the same issue on pages 16 and 17 was given over to Sir Paul Kenny to explain how he and the GMB had always fought for workers' rights, how he opposed EU and how the whole movement was going to fight the Trade Union Bill; he threatened dire consequences for the Tories; "If this Bill goes through, to block it you may see a level of disobedience we haven't seen before. An explosion in unofficial stoppages... Would I go to prison? - wouldn't hesitate. But you'd need more than four coppers to pick me up".

MS Editor Ben Chacko did not press him with any 'Hard Talk' questions so we are left with the impression that this chap is a man of honour, a champion of workers' rights and a fighter for the oppressed. Which was why he was knighted by a grateful establishment who recognised these as his strongest virtues, obviously.

Then the Telegraph headlined on 30 September "Jeremy Corbyn faces shadow cabinet mutiny over Trident". Corbyn had declared he would never launch a nuclear strike if he was prime minister. Home secretary Andy Burnham threatens to quit and defence secretary Maria Eagle declared Corbyn's stance 'unhelpful', the Telegraph noted and the ever helpful Sir Paul felt obliged to wade in also "He's got a choice to make in terms of whether he followed the defence policy of the country, or felt that he should resign. His integrity would drive his decision one way or another." We might now begin to get some glimmer of understanding of why he became a "Sir".

Curiously the MS did not attribute to him his proper title and obstinately did not know who the 'major trade union' leaders might be. The unnamed unions were the GMB and Unite, of course, as we all know.

On 3 October we got a surprise intervention from the second leader. *The Guardian* informed us "Len McCluskey proposes softer line on double threshold if government allows updated system for

strike votes." He had accepted the logic of the Tory argument against strikes in the public sector:

"No one, of course, can be happy when strike action takes place – especially in services on which the public depend – on the basis of the active endorsement of only a minority of union members affected, in my long experience of industrial relations, mainly in the private sector, such strikes are a rarity. Were you to be able to accept this modern and democratic proposal to update balloting procedures then Unite, for its part, would be comfortable about accepting the thresholds and the time limit on the validity of ballots proposed in the trade union bill, without prejudice to our position on other elements of the legislation."

So whilst continuing to say he will oppose some of the rest of the Bill – rumour has it that Cameron is prepared to make some concessions elsewhere to get the main thrust of the attack through against liberal Tory objections on the grounds of civil liberties – McCluskey has also obviously conceded that every union member that does not vote is counted as a 'no' vote, a proposition that even Margaret Thatcher did not attempt at the height of her attacks on the trade unions.

Thus he has stabbed the movement in the back; as the 'left' Red Len has delivered the ultimate act of class treachery, thus letting all the right trade union leaders like Kenny and Unison's Dave Prentis off the hook. And they will not even go through the sham of the Special TUC Wembley Conference of 1982 where leader after leader promised to defy the Employment Act 1980 and some said, like Sir Paul, that they were prepared to go to jail. Needless to say they ran away for any serious opposition to that Bill as they are doing now.

We waited with bated breath for the MS to show us the way forward. On Monday 5 October there was no mention whatsoever to the appalling act of class treachery. But on Tuesday the new line was up and running – Red Len had done a very clever thing! Outrageously that nasty Tory business secretary Sajid Javid has "slapped down a compromise (!!) over strike ballots yesterday, branding unions 'bullies'. Javid had "slammed the door in the unions' face by twice singling out Mr McCluskey for attack".

Who would have thought that the Tories would be so nasty to someone who had grovelingly offered to surrender to them? It may well be enough for him to join Sir Paul in the House of Lords because Javid has not rejected the offer at all, it is clear from the piece, he just could not stop himself from gloatingly contemptuously at the grovel.

But the *Star Comment* of the same day clarifies their position even

more. Javid “showed just how much respect he has for ordinary people when he responded to an offer from Unite to accept draconian new turnout thresholds imposed on strike ballots in return for secure workplace balloting.” If they are “draconian” why should we accept them at all? And this without even a fight?

And did McCluskey have the endorsement of the Unite Executive to make this offer? What of the leading lefts, Martin Mayer, Sean McGovern et al who had chosen Jeremy Corbyn in preference to McCluskey’s preference Andy Burnham? The MS connections and their silence shows how left the United Left is in the face of this existential challenge to trade union organisation.

Fortunately some in Unite like the Unite Scottish Rank and File are not prepared to lie down on this. It really is time to organise a proper rank and file movement in Unite response countrywide against this, the Grass Roots Left will certainly cooperate in any way we can in achieving this.

The Unite Scottish Rank and File had this to say on 5 October:

“It has been well documented in recent months that the Trade Union Bill is the biggest attack on trade union members since the dark days of Thatcher. An ideological and vicious attempt to suppress the workers

of this country from defending themselves from the excesses of capitalism that goes to the very heart of our human and civil rights.

My understanding is that Len McCluskey said much the same thing at a meeting of the National Executive recently, but there was little discussion and certainly no decision taken... on whose behalf is he speaking? Certainly not Unite members and certainly not the 100,000 people who marched outside the Tory party conference in Manchester.

Mr McCluskey’s letter to the prime minister and his nervous defence of what he had written, on the Andrew Marr show, came as a surprise to most. It puts him at odds with the Labour Party leadership (for markedly different reasons than in the past), his trade union leader comrades and his union’s membership.

Ultimately the message that he has given out is that he is a Trade Union leader who is willing to do deals with the Tories and what else will he be willing to concede? That is what will come out of this. He has put himself and Unite at odds with everyone else opposed to this bill. He has weakened his own and Unite’s position and has made himself a laughing stock.”

“Not the smartest thing you’ve done Mr McCluskey.”

<https://scottishrankandfile.wordpress.com/2015/10/05/trade-union-bill/> ▲

## Scottish Rank and File says: Corbyn’s election, Time for change

You can contact the Rank and File by either email or telephone: Email: scottishrankandfile@gmail.com, Tel. 07530 939957

The election of Jeremy Corbyn, as leader of the Labour Party, has been like a logjam that has been removed which has allowed and facilitated a better flow of progressive views and thoughts, with socialism suddenly becoming in vogue.

The Labour Party appears to turning itself from being only an election machine and into a party with potential to influence progressive movements throughout the UK.

But why did it take the election of a 66 year old parliamentarian, a back bencher for over thirty years, to release this enthusiasm for a clear alternative to austerity, a man who struggled to get the 35 nominations needed to get on to the ballot paper, with many of the so-called trade unionists in the Parliamentary Labour Party failing to back him?

Witnessing the packed halls as Corbyn toured the country, it became clear that people of all age groups, within the Labour Trade Union family, were waiting for this moment, yet like the unpredictability of May’s general election result, the key players within the trade union movement were taken by surprise by the impact that he has had on the nation and are now struggling how to deal with this new found confidence.

**Why, with all the resources that the TU movement have, were they not in the position to realise this potential and to release it in a positive manner as Corbyn has done?**

Could the reason be, that the Trade Unions are unable to engage its membership? Unwilling to listen, out of touch, close down debate and stagnation of thought? The same reasons why Corbyn’s leadership rivals failed to connect in the leadership campaign.

Since the election of the coalition in 2010, there has been a catalogue of missed opportunities for the movement to respond to. The objectives of privatisation, deregulation and attacks on trade unionism under the name of “austerity”. The consequences of not responding has seen the living standards reduced for the mass of working class people while wealth has increased for the

minority elite. with the working class and our communities under such relentless attack, the trade union response has been nothing more than tokenistic.

The failure to build on the mass demonstrations of March and November 2011 against austerity and pension cuts simply highlight the pitiful leadership which has, sadly, led to a lack of confidence among trade union members. The call to look at the “Practicalities of a general strike” at the 2013 TUC, was nothing more than window dressing for an organisation which offers very little for working people.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics, show that nearly one million jobs in the public sector have been lost in the UK since the Tories first came into power with the coalition in 2010 with 84,000 lost in Scotland. Why, with this devastating amount of job losses, there has been no co-ordinated response by the TUC, is beyond comprehension.

The attack on collective bargaining, which many view as a corner stone of trade union strength, has seen the UK trade union movement currently drop to second lowest within the EU, while in other countries in Europe, collective agreement continue to grow. This is both bad for trade unions and the economy itself, and is a significant contributor to the growth of inequality which creates its own misery.

The failure to co-ordinate an industrial campaign against a weak coalition is seen as being symptomatic of the indecisions shown by the Union leadership and will be remembered as a grave error to thousands of workers.

The failure of above giving rise to the election of this reactionary Tory Government.

We now have a Tory Government unchained from its weak coalition partner, intent on delivering the final coup de grace to the trade union movement, and taking the labour further into the Victorian era. The thousands employed on precarious working conditions, a throw back to this era, don’t need people to stand up for them, they need their Unions to protect them from this

harsh reality in a so-called modern country with the fifth largest economy in the world.

In this bleak political landscape, the challenge for the movement is huge.

How we deal with this challenge will require strong leadership with fresh ideas, a clear vision to lead the movement, not for the next five years but for future generations with a vision for organising, as well as industrial and political strategies.

Surely the proposals within the trade union bill will awaken the slumbering beast.

Corbyn politics demands “straight talking”, a principle that the trade unions need to embrace. The closeness to the previous new Labour agenda exemplified by the lack of influence during Labour governments of 1997-2010 which left workers in the UK still facing draconian labour laws, the worst in Europe, and where we now fight off a low base when challenging the Tories current proposals.

How has the trade union leadership reacted to the ‘Corbyn affect’? Well, dangerous concessions on thresholds as being suggested by some, could mean that nothing much has changed and for the unions, its business as usual. Surely this position is untenable?

It seems ironic that when the Labour Party is on the rise with huge increases in membership, the supposed bastions of progressive ideas, faces stagnation.

Perhaps like Labour, it’s time for change, and perhaps for individuals within the key affiliates, it’s time to recognise that need and for some to move on, most importantly, for the survival of the trade union movement they claim committed too.

When Greek ex-finance minister Yanis Varoufakis addressed the recent TUC he closed with the following, “But comrades, to finish on a slightly pessimistic note and a word of caution to what is happening here in Britain, the enemy is always within. The enemy is always the Ramsay McDonalds, the enemy is fear in our ranks. Try to excise it from your hearts and the hearts of your leaders”. It’s time to act before it’s too late.▲

# Statement by the Grass Roots Left Secretariat on the election of the General Secretary of the GMB

**Defend the victimised GMB members, Keith Henderson, Steve Forrest and Marial 19-11-2015**

The election for the General Secretary of the General Municipal and Boilermakers union (the GMB) just concluded was in our opinion a bureaucratic stitch-up of monumental proportions as we will attempt to show in this account.

The report Electoral Reform Services on the election for the General Secretary of the GMB, issued on 12 November, declared:

Number of voting papers despatched: 610,023, Number of voting papers returned to the scrutineer: 26,658, Turnout: 4.4%, Number of votes found to be spoiled or otherwise invalid: 170, Total number of valid votes to be counted: 26,488. Tim Roache was declared the winner with 15,034 votes (56.7%) and Paul McCarthy got 11,454 (43.3%). [1]

Tim Roache has been elected to the highest office in the union on the votes of 2.46% of the membership. The bureaucratic centralism of the GMB leaders, and particularly under the most recent leadership of Sir Paul Kenny, has led to a mass alienation of almost the entire membership.

A series of comments on the Left Futures website on the day the election result was released shows this graphically.

James Martin posted:

"I hope he (Tim Roache) will look to reverse the bureaucratic deadness of GMB structures which go a long way to explain such an appalling turnout. Branches barely exist, everything is run by full time officials and 'rank and file' is an alien concept. As a result GMB are slowly but surely being squeezed out of education, most recognition agreements in academies don't even bother to mention them as there are no activists to raise it and the full timers are finding they are either too busy or just lack the local knowledge to intervene anymore, and I suspect this is repeated in other local authority and former local authority areas. But without lay activists it is hard to see how GMB would ever win a ballot under the latest Tory anti-TU laws." [2]

He went on the say:

"...I do speak as a GMB member for around 5 years. Prior to that due to various jobs I was in Unite, PCS/CPSA, Unison/Nupe and the NUR. I was a rep and branch officer in most of those, as well as being president of a trades council for a decade... But what I have learned from three decades of trade union activism is that GMB is the worst union in terms of activists I have ever been a member of (which given I've been a member of Unison is quite a feat). It is also the one where regional officials have the most power (including being able to close down branches)... As I say, the highly top-down bureaucratic nature of the GMB will if it is not changed be its undoing." [3]

On the 16 November 2015 Chris Jones expressed his hopes for a better future:

"Well hopefully now that a left winger and Corbyn supporter has been elected, activism in the GMB will be regenerated. Great news." [4]

James Martin was still a little sceptical:

"I hope so Chris. I tend to agree with a lot of Keith Henderson's analysis of the bureaucratic deadness within GMB that reduces rank and file involvement to alarmingly low levels [5] – and it was a shame (but no surprise) he didn't get enough nominations to get on the ballot paper. Keith some may recall is the former GMB full time official and Labour Party member who was sacked, and his Employment Tribunal decided that while his dismissal was fair, he had suffered direct discrimination and harassment because of his "left-wing democratic socialist beliefs" and awarded him damages. The ET said that his socialist beliefs did constitute a philosophical belief and was capable of protection under the Equality Act (always useful to remember!). GMB appealed



Sir Paul Kenny – over ten years General Secretary of the GMB; never once actually elected to the post.

and won on the basis that the attack on his beliefs was not a pattern of behaviour but within a single act (by Paul Kenny no less – no wonder he was made a lord!). [6]"

In February (As soon as he was aware that the election for the General Secretary was called) Keith Henderson announced that he would like to seek nominations.

Keith is a member of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC), the Grass Roots Left and a former Regional Officer of the GMB London Region. His working life has been committed to trade unionism.

In December 2012, Keith was dismissed from his employment with the GMB following his actions in carrying out the wishes of its members. Keith had organised a picket of Parliament on the day of action in the public sector pensions' dispute on 30th November 2011 which followed a democratic decision of the GMB members employed in the House of Commons who had voted to take strike action and who had also voted to organise picket lines on the Houses of Parliament on the day of the strike.

Paul Kenny, the General Secretary, contacted Keith directly by phone, shouting at him, claiming that his actions were too left wing and over the top, insisting that Labour MPs be allowed to cross the picket lines.

Keith stands for the election of all union officers who should be accountable to democratically elected bodies of lay members at a National and Regional level. He also stands for devolving resources from a National and Regional level to a workplace and a local level.

John McDonnell MP (now Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer) wrote to Paul Kenny on 18 October 2013, and said:

"Many Labour MPs supported the strike and rightfully respected the picket lines. This appears to have upset some in the office of the Labour leader... This must be the first time a trade union, and possibly any employer, has been found to have considered a person being a Left wing democratic socialist as part of the reasoning for sacking him. I am sure you agree that the union would not want to be associated with any finding of discriminatory treatment of an employee on the basis of his belief in democratic socialism." [7]

Keith proposed to stand on a Manifesto found here: [8] which outlines in more detail the mechanics of reintroducing democracy, accountability and devolution of power in the GMB. Unfortunately

Keith was denied the opportunity of standing for General Secretary by what are in our opinion outrageous bureaucratic byzantine manoeuvrings that would make those ancient emperors blush.

Keith was forced to go to the Certification Officer because all his avenues of appeal were exhausted within the GMB. The Certification Officer has considered Keith's complaint and has sent it to the GMB who now have an opportunity to reply.

The five heads of complaint are:

1) On or around 1 July 2015 GMB breached section 47 (1) of the 1992 Act in that the Union's by-law 13 relating to the Election of General Secretary and Treasurer 2015 prevented Mr Henderson, and other lay members of the union, from contacting branches to advise them of their intention to stand as a candidate in the election for the post of General Secretary and Treasurer.

2) On or around 1 July 2015 GMB breached section 47 (1) of the 1992 Act in that the nomination period of 8 weeks was insufficient for intended nominees to gain the required nominations from 30 branches and was insufficient for branches to arrange and hold meetings to decide upon whether to support a given individual's nomination.

3) On or around 1 July 2015 GMB breached section 47 (1) of the 1992 Act in that the Union's London Central X58 branch was not provided with the necessary papers/information for the election of General Secretary and Treasurer, including the nomination form, until 3 weeks into the nomination period which curtailed the 8 week nomination period thereby leaving insufficient time to write to branch members, arrange a suitable date for a nomination meeting, arrange a venue and give reasonable notice to members of such a meeting.

4) On or around 1 July 2015 GMB breached section 47 (1) of the 1992 Act in that the Union did not provide sufficient information that the election of General Secretary and Treasurer was being held and, in particular, most members did not know of the 22 June to 17 August 2015 nomination period as no written notification to the membership was allowed and there was no notification on the Union's website.

5) On or around 30 June 2015 GMB breached the Union's by-law 13 in that Regional Secretaries Tim Roache, Paul McCarthy and Paul Maloney and National Secretary Gary Smith contacted the Morning Star newspaper directly or indirectly which published an article stating that these Union officials were seeking nominations from the GMB branches for the election of General Secretary and Treasurer. This article constituted the issuing on behalf of candidates in the election of a text, circular or other material (whether written, typed or printed and whether communicated electronically or otherwise), other than an election address according with by-laws 6 to 12 inclusive, and so was prohibited under by-law 13.

The President and Secretary of his own Branch, London Central General X58, were suspended in part for sending out a newsletter. Such importance was given to such an innocent communication which notified the members of his own Branch that he would be asking for his own Branches nomination. Such notification was seen as "order of business" to be discussed and voted on at the branch meeting. The nomination of the Branch being open to any members who chose to put themselves forward, one of which was Keith Henderson.

The GMB by-laws were drafted such that it seems that they precluded Keith from contacting other Branch Secretaries informing them that he would like to be nominated for the position of General Secretary and Treasurer of the union.

Keith was informed (at his complaint hearing) by a Committee Member that he could verbally inform people that he was seeking to be nominated or he could telephone them to let them know, which Keith had not been made aware before, after all his years in the Union nor is it clearly stated in By-law 13.

Generally you are absolutely prohibited from writing that down in any document, email or twitter. As we can see from the above complaints to the Certification Officer contacting the Morning Star and



**Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary elect; 2.46% of the votes from the ballots issued secured his election, surely a record low for the election to the top post of any union.**

securing what amounted to an advertisement in that paper seeking nominations somehow was not deemed in breach of those carefully crafted bylaws.

Of course, if you were a lay member you would not have those contact details and the byzantine bureaucrats made sure you had no way of getting them. However, all the full time officials would have no trouble getting those details, particularly if 'Sir Paul Kenny' was sympathetic.

Keith was nominated by his own branch after deliberations, questions and a vote having been taken. The meeting was open to anyone who wanted to stand and be nominated.

Keith's nomination was acknowledged by the Returning Officer, Steve Short. For that show of defiance the outraged bureaucrats have now victimised the President and Secretary of his branch as a scorched earth lesson to all future rebels. They did not do what they were told. How dare they not obey?

The President and Secretary were suspended from holding office and alleged to have, amongst other things, posted a totally misleading newsletter to branch members which contained canvassing support for Keith Henderson in the election of General Secretary and Treasurer, and was misleading in regard to not representing all the facts accurately, in terms of the receipt of the General Secretary and Treasurer Nomination Pact and posting process.

The President and Secretary, having taken independent legal advice, were advised that there was no breach of by-law 13, if there were any inaccuracies in the newsletter, they were minor and unintentional which were corrected at the branch meeting and could be corrected again given the opportunity.

We have not experienced such control or show of power in our lifetimes, and are disgusted at such treatment. Do as you are told or face the consequences regardless of what you are asked to do is right or reasonable or doable, just do it and then argue about it or discuss it later. Do what you are told. Is this what trade unionism is all about now?

Below is the letter imposing the punishment on the President; the Secretary's letter was similar except she was suspended from office for two years and not the three imposed on the President. The 'offence' is, amongst other allegations, informing their branch members via a newsletter that Keith Henderson was seeking a nomination from his own branch to stand for the office of General Secretary:

**Continued on p. 16**

# Death by DWP—A case study of one avoided

**By Ella Downing**

Jim suffered a debilitating stroke in 2011 which hospitalised him, took much effort to partially recover from and meant he could no longer continue his 30+ years' service as a dispatch rider. He was forced to move into a warden monitored flat, and assisted by his flatmate of many years, found appropriate and local accommodation. However it wasn't until September 2015 that he was finally awarded Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and put in the Support Group (which means Job Centre Plus and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are legally not permitted to insist he does work related activity, i.e. improve his employment skills and job hunt).

His left-brain stroke had several serious and enduring effects. Jim walks slowly with the aid of a stick, he has back pain, hip pain and poor eyesight among other issues. Most critically however are these two further factors; the impairment to his cognitive function- a poor memory and slowed thinking, and also that his writing is barely legible. In the first instance recalling all of his medical issues is troublesome when claiming, as is remembering to attend mandatory interviews and appointments. In the second he finds it impossible to fill out forms himself.

When someone applied for ESA on Jim's behalf it took approximately one year before he was offered a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) by the DWP to determine whether he was eligible for ESA. He forgot to bring anyone with him and failed the assessment. He had to apply for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). He then forgot to attend a signing-on appointment and they closed his claim. He had to apply for JSA once again and the same thing happened a second time. During this period his assistants went through the procedure of appealing the DWP's refusal to grant Jim ESA. First a Mandatory Reconsideration, which was rejected out of hand, and then we went for the formal appeal to be heard by an independent tribunal service.

Looking through the documents the DWP used to reject Jim's application revealed a fairly substantial number of anomalies and inaccuracies, too numerous to list here. For instance it claimed he does not tremble when he has constant trembling in both hands. It said he lived alone and stands in the shower; he lives in a warden monitored apartment and has a shower seat installed. Most telling however was the lengthy examination of his left leg and the wealth of detail the report provided about its functionality.

But there was no mention of his right leg which, it seems, was not examined at all. The stroke affected his right side, his right leg was the one affected. That was perhaps the most telling point raised. Nothing was said of his memory or cognitive function at all.

In all Jim scored 9 points in the first medical assessment; 15 is the threshold to be awarded ESA. After presenting to the Appeal Panel, which consisted of a medical Doctor and Judge, Jim scored 39 points, demonstrating the gross bias of the initial assessment when they thought he would have no one to fight his case. The Appeal Panel correctly concluded that he is profoundly unable to work.

The judgement noted that Jim would have been disproportionately susceptible to benefit sanctions for non-intentional non-compliance – that is he would have his money stopped through no fault of his own. More telling however is the negative impact to his health; should he not be awarded ESA and placed in the Support Group the stress could lead to a further stroke and we can only speculate how severe that might have been. Finally stopping Jim's JSA or ESA affects his Housing and Council Tax Benefits. This could have resulted in homelessness, a situation horrendous enough for an able-bodied person never mind the disabled.

So a happy ending then? Yes, but with some reservations. Think

what would have happened to Jim if it were not for the good-Samaritans who helped him with claiming? No need to imagine. In 2013 Michael O'Sullivan of North London hanged himself after his disability benefit was stopped. The coroner ruled there was a direct causal relationship between the decision and the death. In the same year David Clapson died in his home after having his benefit stopped. He was diabetic and could not afford his electricity and so could not store his insulin at the right temperature. He died from diabetic ketoacidosis as a result of a severe lack of insulin. These are not exceptional stories. They have become quite routine.

Benefit sanctions and denying claimants the correct benefit in theory is not cost effective. The cost of the fallout should be borne by other government departments. In practice many will simply fall through the net, like the cases we have quoted. But over and above that these practices serve a more fundamental political agenda. The continued and unrelenting punishment of the unemployed, sick and disabled serves to blacken our name, to highlight individual over social responsibility and in effect turn large sections of the population against one another. It makes lack of compassion commonplace. It dehumanises. This is not a side-effect, this is the purpose.

As I write this Jim is in the final stages of securing all the benefits due to him. We fully expect him to have a roof over his head and some pennies in his pocket for some time to come. How very differently this could have turned out, and how grave the situation is for others in a similar position with no one to fight their corner. ▲



Iain Duncan Smith, the Minister for Work and Pensions. Figures released in August 2015 by the DWP showed that nearly 90 people died every month between 2011 and 2014 after they had been declared fit for employment after undergoing a work capability assessment (WCA). Comment by 'Findlow' on the Coroner's verdict on the death of Michael O'Sullivan:

"This shocking, grossly unjust and shameful news is made even worse, if that were possible, by knowing that it is almost inevitably the tip of the iceberg. Obviously coroners have to be extremely cautious when they pronounce on the cause of a death, but we all know all too well that thousands of people have died after being found "fit for work" by DWP outsourced examiners. The DWP do not even appear to say sorry; on the contrary their language is cold and clinical in the extreme: "the DWP admitted its own "clear policy" that further evidence should be sought when claimants mentioned suicide was "regrettably not followed in this case"?" And as for this – well it's just cynically laughable: "The DWP claimed improvements had been made to the system. A spokesman said: "Following reforms to the WCA... people are getting more tailored support to return to work..."

## RMT disputes; Night Tube, Interserve on DLR and the Sword of Damocles over Glen Hart By Carol Foster

**A**s always life is very lively at the RMT. Talks are taking place with ACAS regarding pay conditions and the dreaded night tube. Night tube, if the late great Bob Crow will forgive me, reminds me of Millwall because no one likes it but TFL don't care. The *Evening Standard* report an RMT spokesman saying:

"The talks have been crawling along anyway – and now they have stopped. Unless London Underground dramatically improves its offer – and there is no sign of that happening – then there is little chance of [the] Night Tube happening this year."

However I would like to concentrate on two major actions taking place at the moment. Firstly the security and cleaning staff working for Interserve Facilities on their Docklands Light Railway contract; the Interserve Dispute. Their slogan is **Tube Cleaners Demand Dignity and Respect**. It seems Interserve have been short paying the cleaners whilst cutting their jobs. Their demands are:

- 1) Pay up. All cleaners must be paid in full on time every time. No excuses.
- 2) £10 per hour. The Mayor's London living wage of £9.45 is not enough to have a decent quality of life in London.
- 3) Stop job cuts.
- 4) Direct employment for all agency workers
- 5) Free travel passes for all cleaners (*At the moment cleaners have to pay to travel to the stations they clean*)

As a result RMT are having a demo on Tuesday 15 December TIME 1500 PLACE Interserve HQ 1-3. College Hill London EC4 2RA. Please join us if you can.

The other important dispute is the Glen Hart affair.

Glen, LTRC Political Officer and membership secretary for RMT Morden and Oval branch (LT regions) has been hounded



**"Once again RMT activist, Glen Hart (above) finds himself with a gross misconduct charge hanging over him. This Sword of Damocles exists purely, we believe, because Glen has been key in defending jobs and supporting the LUL strike."**

by LU management. In my opinion this is for being an excellent rep who always looked after the members. Being black intelligent and articulate did not help.

The incident in question was when Glen rang his manager that there was no cover for his mealbreak which in accordance with health and safety regulations he needed to take. His manager suggested he worked overtime (RMT have an overtime ban) Glen refused to do this and closed the station for an hour.

To keep the story short he is now on a CDI for gross misconduct and to quote the union

**"We shall not allow management to pick off members who have been carrying out legal democratically balloted actions of our union"**

If there are any unsung heroes Glen Hart is one and I feel sure the union will do *everything possible* to make sure he is reinstated and gets the justice he deserves. ▲

### Three months of class and political struggle in pictures



1) Solidarity with Antifascist Resistance in Ukraine activists protest the visit of Andriy Parubiy to London on 23 October: Parubiy is the deputy speaker of the Verkhovna Rada — Ukraine's parliament. He is the founder of the Social National Party of Ukraine, a fascist party styled on Hitler's Nazis, with membership restricted to ethnic Ukrainians. The Social National Party would go on to become Svoboda, the far-right nationalist party.

2) Picket of the Turkish Embassy in support of the anti-imperialist political prisoner Steve Kaczynski on hunger strike in a Turkish jail. He was released shortly after on 15 October as a result of this international pressure.

3) On 16 August a memorial was unveiled in Goleen Harbour to the Catalpa Six. One of them, Michael Harrington, was a native of my own parish, Goleen, in West Cork. From 1865 to 1867 he and 61 other Fenians were deported to Australia. By 1876 only a few top leaders remained. On 17 April, while many of the warders were watching Perth regatta, he and five others were rowed out to the waiting whaler, the *Catalpa*. It was sent from the US by the old Fenian leader John Devoy. They set sail but were soon becalmed. Early on 19 April the British gunboat, the *Georgette*, a steamer, came alongside and demanded the surrender of the Fenian leaders. But the captain, George Smith Anthony, ran up the Ameri-

can flag and told the British that to fire on an American ship in international waters would be an act of war. A powerful 'magic wind' blew up and the *Catalpa* sailed on for New York, where hundreds of thousands greeted them: *"So come you screw warders and jailers/ Remember Perth regatta day/ Take care of the rest of your Fenians/ Or the Yankees will steal them away."*

4) 5,000 Kurds and Turkish leftists demonstrated outside Downing Street against the Ankara bombing of 10 October which killed 104 peace demonstrators on 11 October. PKK supporters also had posters denouncing the Iraqi Kurd leader Massoud Barzani for collaborating with Turkey, Israel and the US against his own people.



1) Victory at the National Gallery on 2–10-15 for the workers and Candy Udwin; 100 days of strikes kept her as rep and wages and conditions.



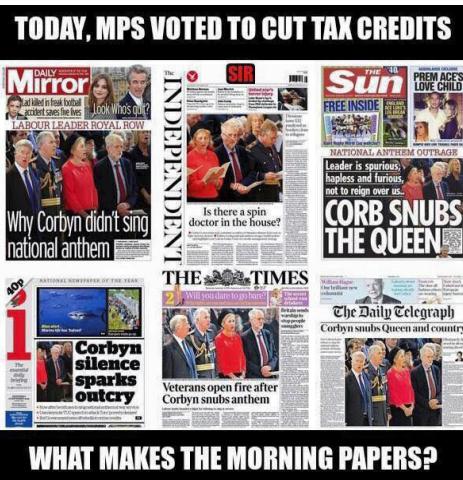
2) The 'red bloc' at the 60,000 strong Manchester demonstration on 4 October outside the Tory party Conference.



3) Picket opposite the House of Commons to protest the passage of the vicious (anti) Trade Union Bill on 10 November.



1) Corbyn's first question time on 15 September where he first demonstrated the power of his support in the ranks and ignited the struggle against Tax Credits.



#### WHAT MAKES THE MORNING PAPERS?

2) The entire British mass media in panic at the election of Corbyn as they hailed the cliché ridden guff and outright lies that was Hillary Benn's warmongering speech.



3) The Mirror hosted fringe meeting at the Labour party conference in Brighton on 27 September. Equivocation from some at the top table; TU bureaucrats who blocked the Trident vote—danger ahead!



1) Fleeing from the Islamic State massacre in Paris on 13 November; innocent victims of imperialism's chickens coming home to roost.



2) Charlie Pottin's funeral on 21 October. We paid our respects to the old Jewish Socialist fighter against Zionism and for the Palestinians.



3) Comrades and friends said goodbye to veteran Trotskyist Posadist Brian McNeil (Lynam) 1933—2015 on 2 December.

# Bloody Sunday; will those ultimately responsible for the mass murder ever be brought to justice? That struggle continues! By Michael Holden

The *Irish Times* recently reported the arrest of a former British soldier in connection with the Bloody Sunday killings in Derry on January 30th 1972. The report states he is being questioned about three of the killings - William Nash, John Young and Michael McDaid. The ex-soldier served with the Parachute Regiment on that fateful day and is now 66 years old. He was arrested in County Antrim where he has been living for some time.

The Bloody Sunday atrocity - or as it is also known the 'Bogside Massacre' - was one of the most significant events of the conflict in the North because of the fact a large number of civilians were killed by state forces in full view of the public and international press. It was the highest number of civilians killed in a single shooting during the conflict. In the immediate aftermath of the killings the British government set about a cover-up and ordered an 'investigation' into what happened. Lord Widgery was appointed to head the investigation. This phoney enquiry cleared the Parachute Regiment and the British authorities of any blame. - accepting the soldiers claims they shot at 'gunmen and bombers' even though no bombs exploded or shots were fired by the marchers. The findings of the Widgery Tribunal/investigation were widely criticized as a whitewash and a cover-up.

Twenty seven years later in 1998 another enquiry was ordered to re-investigate the killings. Lord Saville was charged with this investigation - but it took yet another 12 years to produce a report. In 2010 the Saville Enquiry finally published its report and concluded the killings were 'unjustified and unjustifiable.' It found that all those shot were unarmed, that none were posing

a threat, that no bombs were thrown, and that the Parachute regiment has 'knowingly put forward false accounts.'

None of the soldiers or their officers were ever charged with lying under oath in a courtroom, a criminal offence, perjury, for which Jeffery Archer got four years in a case far less serious than these. And that is without ever proceeding to the substantial charges of premeditated murder.

Following this the RUC/PSNI began a murder investigation into the killings and six years on only one soldier has been arrested - but not charged. Will others follow? It's hardly likely. Despite the fact the Saville report was certainly a more comprehensive study than the Widgery debacle - even so does anyone really believe those ultimately responsible for mass murder on Bloody Sunday will ever be brought to justice? Those who fired the shots, the officers who gave the order to shoot and more importantly those in government at the time?

However as we see from the story from the *Derry Journal* opposite Kate and Linda Nash, Helen Deery and other relatives of the Bloody Sunday murdered are determined to pursue that struggle to the end. It is certain that without their refusal to abandon the annual Bloody Sunday commemoration march and their tenacious struggle through the legal and political quagmire



imposed by the British state and the Northern Ireland establishment, which now includes the Sinn Fein leadership (SF members and SDLP members have been more helpful) that paratrooper would never have been arrested. And more may follow him, even if we do not get the full 56 criminals, 43 years later, six and a half after Saville.

It remains to be seen and only time will tell and will we be told that those who did the shooting and killing were 'only following orders'? Probably! It's been said before, in Nuremburg! ▲

## From p. 12 To Steve Forrest:

Subject: RULE 5 HEARING

Dear Steve

Further to the hearing held on Wednesday 11 November 2015, after much deliberation and examining evidence including that from both Steve Short National Returning Officer and Maria Ludkin National Legal Officer, The Regional Committee came to the following unanimous decision.

In your position of Branch President of the X58 London Central General Branch, your actions of sending a deliberately contrived and misleading newsletter to all branch members canvassing support for Keith Henderson in the forthcoming election for General Secretary and Treasurer you were in breach of Election By-Law 13 and by ignoring the instructions of the Regional Secretary and the Regional Returning Officer, we find that you were in breach of Rules 35.11, 35.13 and Rule 35.15 of the GMB Rule book.

We therefore rule that you should be removed as Branch President and no longer be eligible to stand for any posts within the GMB nor attend GMB Congresses for a period of 3 years.

I would advise that you have the right Rule (5.6) to appeal in writing to the General Secretary within one month of the decision.

Yours sincerely

Roy Dunnett, London Regional President.

If you think these actions are beyond belief and we are making it up just ask Brother Dunnett.

Signed by the GRL Secretariat:

Gerry Downing

Jerry Hicks

Ian Scott

Tushar Sakar

## Notes

[1] Electoral Reform Services 12th November 2015, GMB Election of General Secretary & Treasurer, <http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/General%20Secretary%20&%20Treasurer%20Certified%20Report.pdf>

[2] Left Futures, Left candidate wins general secretary election in GMB, <http://www.leftfutures.org/2015/11/left-candidate-wins-general-secretary-election-in-gmb/>

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Draft: election address for the GMB general secretary election 201, Candidate's Name: Keith Henderson, [http://grassrootsleftunit.blogspot.co.uk/2000/02/gmb-2015-general-secretary-election\\_23.html](http://grassrootsleftunit.blogspot.co.uk/2000/02/gmb-2015-general-secretary-election_23.html)

[6] Opus cit, Left Futures

[7] LRC Campaign News, John McDonnell defends Keith Henderson against dismissal as officer of the GMB, 13th November 2013 <http://l-r-c.org.uk/news/story/john-mcdonnell-defends-keith-henderson-against-dismissal-as-officer-of-the-/>

[8] Opus cit, Left Futures. ▲



## Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group list of POWs

Please correct prisoners' list

Maghaberry Prison	isolation)	Hospital Road	• Dean Evans:	• Garret Mulley	• Pat Barry
Old Road	• Seamus Kearney	BELFAST BT8 8NA	• Tony Carroll	• Paddy MacDonald	Magilligan Prison
Ballinderry Upper	• Aidan Coney	• Sharon Rafferty	• Brian Walsh	• David Gallagher	Point Road, Co Derry
Lisburn	• Gavin Coney	• Nuala Gormley	• Nick Kendall	E2: Unaligned	BT49 0LR
BT28 2PT	• Mark McGuigan	Portlaoise Prison	• Brian Cavlan	• Colin Brady	• Tony Friel
ROE 4: IRPWA	• Gavin Coyle (CSU)	Dublin Road	• Kevin Devlan	• John McGreal	Dóchas Centre,
• Colin Duffy	• Martin McGilloway	Portlaoise, Co Laois	• David Rocket	E1: Unaligned	North Circular Road,
• John Paul Wootton	(CSU)	Portlaoise (E3 and E4)	• Tom Hughes	• John Daly	Dublin 7
• Brendan McConville	ROE 3: Cabhair	• Eddie McGrath	• Davy Jordan	• John Keogh	Éiríú
• Harry Fitzsimons	• Ciaran Collins	• Kevin Braney	• Michael Barr	• Finton O'Farrell	• Ursula Ní Sheanáin
• Martin Kelly	• Gabriel Mackle	• John Brock	• Cormac Fitzpatrick	• Declan Rafferty	
Alex McCrory	• Eugene Mc Loone	• Declan Phelan	E4: Teach na Fáilte	• Séan Ryan	Continuity Sinn Fein
Tarlach Mac	• Martin McLoone	• Michael Finlay	INLA	E1: Limerick Real	Portlaoise
Dhomhnall	• Willie Wong	• Dean Byrne	• Eugene Kelly	Sinn Féin	• Dermot Gannon
• Barry Concannon	ROE 3: Cogús	• Sean Connolly	• Noel Mooney	• Dean Fitzpatrick	• Dave Dodrell
• Jason Ceulemans	• Phil O'Donnell	• Hubert Duffy	Non-INLA E4	• Dylan Cahill	• Stephen Fogarty
Damien Harkin	• Eamon Cassidy	• Pierce Moran	• Michael Mc Hugh	• Joseph Kirwin	Limerick Jail
Neil Hegarty	• Conor Hughes	• Bernard Dempsey	• David Murphy	• Buddy Nolan	• Rose Lynch,
Nathan Hastings	• Ta McWilliams	• Dessie Christie	E2:	• Ken O'Reilly	The IRPSG apologises for missing two POWs from its list of those CSF POWs held in Maghaberry in its last issue: John Sheehy and Patrick Blair. All ten have now been bailed but must remain in the 6 counties.
Thomas Mellon	• Gerard Flanagan	• Brian Quinn	• Patrick Tierney	Mountjoy Prison	
Christopher O' Kane	• Seamus Daly	• Bob Day	• Dalton McKeitt	North Circular	
Seamus McLaughlin	• Kevin O'Neill	• Nick McBennett	• Joe O'Brien	Road,	
Gerard McManus	• Robert O'Neill	• Ciaran Burke	• Michael McKevitt	Dublin 7	
Kevin Barry Nolan	Danny McClean	• Willie Jackson	• Charles Anthony Deery		
Barry Petticrew (in	Hydebank Wood	• Stephen Hendrick			

### Bring Sean O'Neill Home

As part of his bail conditions, Sean (who is 76 has terminal cancer, is a lifelong republican and a veteran of the Border Campaign of 1956-62 —IRPSG) is forced to reside in the occupied six counties and is prevented from returning home to his native Limerick, he also cannot associate with any of his co-accused.

Obviously as Sean is from Limerick, his friends and family are finding it difficult having to travel

the long distance up and down to Ulster hospital in the six counties to keep Sean informed and updated, and also just to offer a friendly face, this has made a most stressful situation even more stressful for Sean and is clearly having a negative impact on his mental health.

Despite this, Sean has remained committed and steadfast to his life-long Republican ideals and continues to show leadership even from his hospital bed.

We in Continuity Sinn Féin once again call for an

end to the British policy of internment by remand of all Irish Republican POW's and call for the return of Sean to his family in Limerick.

We salute Sean O'Neill for the courage he has shown and he truly is an inspiration to us all.

We ask Republicans of all shades and indeed anyone interested in human rights issues to join our campaign to Bring Sean Home!

Continuity Sinn Féin,

POW Department

28-10-2015. ▲

### Statement from CIRA POWs

Maghaberry Jail, Co Antrim September 12, 2015

Today demonstrated yet again that the jail administration has only one agenda in Maghaberry and that is to try and break the resolve of the Republican POWs. The incident which happened this morning was a statement of intent from the jail administration to copper-fasten the conflict fuelled environment within the Republican landings.

The incident which occurred when a Republican POW's partner had to take one of her four children to the toilet, the child is five years of age. Upon reaching the desk she was prevented from leaving by the screws who informed her if she wanted to take one child to the toilet she would have to take all her children. The child was effectively refused access to toilet facilities. The Re-

publican POW called for the S O to explain why this was now an issue when for the past two years on occasion and in similar circumstances his partner was permitted to leave with the child whilst leaving the others with their father.

The S O arrived and stated that it was always policy but it's only now being enforced, the POW rightly argued that this was nonsense and the screws created yet another confrontation. This incident has left the children of the Republican POW deeply upset after hearing how the screws spoke to their mother and father and also witnessing the petty vindictiveness of the screws actions toward their family. The children are now scared to return to visit their father.

"The S O then appears at the end of the visit and attempts to give Republican POWs a direct order from the governor to leave the visitation

area or they will be charged.

Let us state clearly and unequivocally that no Republican POW accepts any order given by a member of the British state apparatus.

This is not the first incident that has happened during our visitation and it will not be tolerated. At every opportunity Republican POWs have gone to great lengths to achieve a conflict free environment, but the blatant intimidation of our families is not acceptable and will be met head on and we will use every resource that we have to bring an end to the corruption enforced by the Maghaberry Jail administration.

We the CIRA POWs would like to thank the wife of another POW for her support this morning as it took a lot of courage to stand up to the bully boys in Maghaberry.

Signed O/C Continuity IRA POWs ▲

## Relatives of Derry people killed during the Troubles launch a scathing assessment of the draft version of the Stormont House Agreement

By Eamon Sweeney 28 September 2015

Extracted from the Derry Journal by Charlie Walsh

Kate and Linda Nash whose brother was shot dead on Bloody Sunday and whose father was seriously wounded on the same day have been scathing of the arrangements made under the SHA. Helen Deery, whose 15-year-old brother Manus was shot dead by the British army has also hit out at the proposals.

Kate Nash said: "Forty-three years on from the

murder of our loved ones and we are no further forward in our quest for justice. The police, military and some politicians know who fired the shots. If this was happening in any other country in the world, the outcry from the international community, including the British government would be deafening. For us, justice being delayed is justice being denied."

Speaking to the 'Journal' Kate Nash said: "Having read the policy paper there are a number of elements which are deeply concerning. Firstly,

there is no mechanism within the Stormont House Agreement to deal with those injured or brutalised during the Troubles. The entire process is focused on death related cases between January 1, 1996 and April 10, 1998."

Part of the SHA mechanism for dealing with the past is a move to replace the current Historical Enquiries Team (HET) with a Historical Investigations Unit (HIU), contending that the new HIU will have a greater degree of independence in terms of powers of investigations as opposed

## Letter to the Irish Times

This article by Fionola Meredith denies the significance of Jeremy Clarkson's anti-Irish racism (Clarkson case undermines real issues of racial prejudice, *Irish Times* 25 November) and comes in the wake of a huge right wing campaign in defence of Clarkson. The blogger Guido Fawkes delivered a petition of 1,000,000 signatures collected online between 10 and 20 March. Of course the Irish connection here is that Paul Staines, aka Guido Fawkes, whose blog gets two million hits a month, is an Irish citizen. His right wing libertarian high Tory politics is demonstrated by his admiration for Guy Fawkes, the ill-fated supporter of the absolute semi-Catholic monarchy against Parliament in the pre-civil war period.

And the *Irish Times* fits neatly into that; it is traditionally the prime supporter of the interests of the British Empire in Ireland. As we approach the anniversary of the 1916 uprising it is clear that increasing sections of Irish ruling class wish to apologise to Britain for that rebellion. Denying the continued presence of anti-Irish racism assists the rehabilitation of the tradition of the pre-1916 pro-British Empire Irish Party of John Redmond.

Death threats were tweeted to Oisín and threats made to his parents. Here are just two examples:

Millions of people's Sunday evening viewing ruined, Oisín Tymon is a nobody and why isn't he dead yet!

— James Ridealgh (@Ridealgh) [March 25, 2015](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/james.ridealgh>

I hope you know what you did, Oisín Tymon, because the Top Gear fans are out to kill you! I heard the Cayman Islands are nice this season...

— Mihály K. (@Michael\_KBL) [March 25, 2015](#)

To our knowledge no serious police investigation has occurred and no arrests have been made of those who issued these criminal death threats. Many are still operating unhindered online.

On specifically anti-Irish racism ('Hibernophobia') we protest that it

is Ms Meridith who has denigrated Oisín. She asserts that he is wrong to allege race hate "even if it bumps up the money stakes" and that invoking it "gives a venal, opportunistic appearance to Ty mon's court action". These remarks are a personal affront to all who have fought against anti-Irish racism like the landlords' signs: "No Blacks, no Irish, No Dogs". And they are doubly insulting to Oisín, portraying him as a mere Irish gold digger.

Further the article asserts that in order for it to be considered anti-Irish racism he must "demonstrate a sustained campaign of ethnically motivated bullying against him by Clarkson" and that all that happened was "a single, fleeting instance of vitriol" and "Clarkson hit him because he was hungry and childish and spoilt, and he wanted a hot dinner. Tymon's ethnicity was just a convenient handle for the presenter's rage." At this stage we are in the realms of Guido Fawkes and the twitter feeds above; the real victim is Clarkson and not Tymon.

But, as Ms Meredith admits, this was not a one-off outburst by Clarkson ("you lazy Irish cunt") but part of a long tradition of racist outbursts and remarks outrageously tolerated by the BBC and never prosecuted by the British state because he was so popular. Here is her back-handed acknowledgement: "Clarkson has repeatedly been accused of racist comments in the past and neither he nor his new bosses at Amazon will enjoy the inevitable rerun of Jeremy's most cringe-inducing Top Gear moments should the case go to court."

Ah, but we won't all have to cringe because previous outbursts were against Backs, Thais, Argentinians etc. and were not at all 'Hibernophobic'. Examples caught on microphone are "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe catch a n\*\*\*\*\* by his toe" and using the term "slope" in Thailand. And that dodgy number plate in Argentina.

But relax, we have not determined as yet what attitude true Hibernians should take to these other, unrelated, forms of racism so vital in dividing workers and sustaining the ideology of Empire.

Yours, etc., Gerry Downing ▲



Helen Deery and Linda and Kate Nash: "at present, the PSNI could arrest up to 56 soldiers in connection with the Bloody Sunday massacre, but haven't done so."

HIU investigation reports on the grounds of 'national security'."

An element of the agreement, that also causes deep concern, says Kate Nash, is the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval.

"This is a truth recovery process which offers 'immunity' to those who choose to co-operate. The evidence given to this body will not be admissible in civil, criminal or coronial proceedings, unless it comes from another source or arises from an investigation. We are also concerned that this information will be minimal and will not include the names of those involved. We are also concerned about the Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG). It may have been described as a key commitment of the agreement, but it remains unclear if it will be included in the Stormont House Agreement bill.

"This needs to be clarified as does the portion of the SHA which states 'In the context of the work of the IRG, the UK and Irish Governments will consider statements of acknowledgment and would expect others to do the same'. Who or what does the word 'others' refer to?"

Kate Nash also said that victim's relatives last week gave a list of additional queries on the issue to the political parties involved in the SHA talks but as yet they have received no response from any political party.

Read more: <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/derry-trouble-s-relatives-scathing-of-stormont-house-agreement-1-6980484#ixzz3sdDiBEzk> ▲



86 Year old Terry Gavin at the IRPSG fundraiser on 4 December in the Cock Tavern, near Euston, London, which raised £150 for the three POW welfare groups, Cabhair, Cogus and the IRPWA.

# Brazil: Defeat the coup d'état against the government of Dilma on the streets!

**No confidence in the government of the PT, organise the workers to defend their rights and historical interests!**

## Frente Comunista dos Trabalhadores / LCFI Brazil 12-12-2015

In Congress the right-wing pro-coup opposition in Brazil comes closer to getting the 2/3 majority they need to approve the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff. In a situation that seems like "nonsense" movies, the main corrupt and corrupting forces in the country, who are linked to the coup plotters and the pro-imperialist right, conspire to remove Dilma, accusing her of corruption. Obviously, as corruption is endemic to all capitalist governments, this issue is only used to justify the coup d'état.

The right-wing and pro-imperialist opposition wants to overthrow the government of the PT because the US wants to recolonize the country by eliminating all the historical rights of the working population. They want to outsource and privatise absolutely everything that is profitable held by the PT government, like the giant oil company Petrobras, without any limits or graduation. They seek to drastically reduce wages under the blackmail of more than 10% unemployment and crack down savagely on all strikes and manifestations of resistance. They seek to attack the working class even more.

To achieve this they use "anti-terrorism laws," a requirement of imperialism that the PT helped to approve. In the end, the overthrow of Dilma by the right will result in a much greater defeat for the working class than to her and the PT.

Regardless of the fact that the process has been initiated as political revenge by Eduardo Cunha (PMDB), when the PT decided to support the impeachment of this corrupt mafia president of the Federal Chamber, the coup in Brazil has been underway for over a year and is an expression of the global competition for control over the Brazil government in the current inter-capitalist Cold War. On one side is US imperialism, NATO and Japan. On the other side is China, Russia, the Bolivarian government and Iran. The conflict already has two open civil wars in Ukraine and Syria and has caused various "regime change" or coups like Honduras, Ecuador, Libya, Paraguay, Egypt, Thailand, Ukraine, Guatemala and Romania.

Behind the impeachment Dilma is the US Embassy; George Soros (who also sponsored the coup in Ukraine); the richest capitalist in Brazil, Jorge Lemann, who owns one of the largest brewers in the world, Ambev; the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) and the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB), the big media employers; the fascist right; the old military dictatorship and the evangelical fundamentalists.

Time is against the government that chose to ally themselves with the employers rather than with the workers. The PMDB, the principal party of the bourgeoisie, created during the military dictatorship (1964-1985), which is led by the

Vice President to Dilma, Michel Temer, has moved to the opposition camp. The PT, who believed that class collaboration was a policy that guaranteed government stability, have seen allies turning into enemies who advocate the overthrow of their government.

The coup will triumph if the current PT's cowardly, bourgeois tactic of passive adaptation is maintained. As long as they prioritise the game of institutional conciliation, where their mass organizations (CUT, MST, trade unions) have a mere supporting role of staging unpretentious demonstrations which are not up to the fight that must take place against the impending coup. Without actually resorting to the mass movement and its methods as the main weapon in the fight against the coup, impeachment is a "chronicle of a death foretold."

Simply put, on the streets there are more or less similar number of right wing protesters and left. The bourgeois media will continue to play its role of greatly exaggerating the right numbers and saying that it is 'the people' who are putting forward the slogan "Out with Dilma!". It takes more than mobilising thousands in every capital, we need a national strike in the main categories, unions and movements directed by the CUT, MST, UNE, MTST.

If we strike at Petrobras, the Post Office, the metallurgical industries, banks, then yes we will carry out an effective fight and crush the coup and sweep the reactionary right off the streets. But the question is, can the thousands of CUT unions rely on their bases to make a political strike against the parliamentary coup d'état? After years of class collaboration, is not the CUT too demoralized for that? You have to try and get mobilizing workers to fight for themselves and not in defence of a government and a party that has betrayed them and whom they no longer trust.

Although there are huge differences between the current process and the coup against Chavez in 2002 in Venezuela, the left turn of the Bonapartist Bolivarian government came after the masses stepped in forcing the release of Chavez when he was held hostage by the military and the businessmen plotters. The only force capable of defeating the coup in Brazil 2015, as it was in Venezuela 2002, is the working and poor people. In Dilma's favour is the fact that her party directs the country's leading mass organizations, something that Chavez did not have back in 2002.

If the organized working class with its methods of struggle contains the coup then the government of Dilma will be forced to depend solely on workers to survive then she cannot again directly apply her anti working class policy of wage freeze and the gradual destruction of all labour and social gains as she has done up to now under pressure from the right and the big imperialist capitalists. Simultaneously by defeating the coup workers will feel strengthened and gain time to organise to defeat the whole neoliberal policy.

The defeats at the hands of imperialism suf-



Dilma Rousseff's approval rating has hit a record low of 9%

ficed this year by the national-populist left and also the Bolivarian revolution in the presidential elections in Argentina and in the parliamentary elections in Venezuela, respectively, are a key element of international imperialist pressure on the Brazilian situation in favour of the right and impeachment.

The petty-bourgeois left, PSTU, PCB, current PSOL and satellites in this constellation as MES / PSOL, CST / PSOL, EM (IMT) MRT-LER (FT), programmatically collapsed before this crucial struggle for the fate of the Brazilian working class. They follow a line of functional sectarianism to the coup of pro-imperialist right, the same line that most of these groups had supported when the mercenary pro-imperialist opposition of "revolutionary" and "rebel" in Libya, Syria and Ukraine.

This petty bourgeois left is divided between those who openly advocate "Out with Dilma!" and those who want to wait for the general election without interruption. Not coincidentally this is the same line as the right-wing opposition, of Aécio (PSDB), and Cunha (PMDB) and Paulinho of the union federation allied with the bosses, the "Força Sindical"; those who are opposing the fight against impeachment by advocating a supposed ideal third camp when the coup is in fact the real world.

They spent the turbulent year of the rise of the right claiming that the mounting coup threat did not exist, that it was a delusion or a mere political trick by the PT. Now, before the imminent coup danger, they say that regardless of whether it is real or not, that the working class should remain oblivious of a political dispute that will result in an even bigger attack on their living conditions.

Those who cannot fight against the right, fascism and imperialism are completely irrelevant to the workers; they do not care about the fate of our class. Defeat the impeachment, orchestrated by the worst enemies of the working population, the great capital and imperialism, which immediately has the Dilma and the PT as their target, but will in the end have the working population as the main victim. The only tactic that can work is one of struggle in defence of our labour and social achievements and to defend the historical interests of our class.

This is the tactic that facilitated the struggle for a revolutionary workers' party, for a real workers' government, won through social revolution, for socialism! ▲

## Plain Tales from the Hills of the pro-imperialist ‘left’

By Gerry Downing



Professor Gilbert Achcar.

**A**s the crisis of global capitalism intensifies and WWIII looms closer forces on the left begin to fracture and divide. Of course many are able to maintain a relatively good stance on the domestic class struggle but when it comes to imperialist war ‘scurvy pacifism’ is rejected equally by the revolutionary Marxist tradition and by the ever-right-moving pro-imperialist left. It was shocking to see Gilbert Achcar, who teaches development studies and international relations at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), from Socialist Viewpoint/Fourth International, supporting the imperialist bombing of Libya, then Syria and Ukraine. We have dealt with these in past issues but new developments produce further outrages. We will take just two.

This from Bob Pitt on Facebook on 28 November:

“Cameron made the 70,000 claim because it’s true... The 70,000 figure excludes the two largest Islamist militias, Ahrar al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam, presumably because their leaders include former jihadis. If you add those two organisations, then the anti-Assad opposition (leaving out the al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra and other smaller jihadi groups) comes to more than 100,000.”

Here is Charles Lister’s summary (the source of Cameron’s figure—GD), he says, and we open a link to *The Spectator*, a Tory magazine owned by David and Frederick Barclay who



“Charles Lister is a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center”.

also own *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper. As proof of ‘moderation’ we got this chart. When you see Lister’s figures for ‘moderates’ and then see the reason beside those figures, “CIA vetted”, and a red warning sign does not immediately begin flashing in your brain you are either a naive political person or you have a political agenda hostile to discovering the truth.

Hence my expressions of amazement at Bob given our past common membership of the WRP and WIL. He seems a long way from revolutionary Trotskyism now.

Southern Front (CIA vetted)	(Deraa, Quneitra, Damascus)	25,000
Northern FSA (CIA vetted)	(Homs, Hama, Idlib, Aleppo)	20,000
Tajamu Fastaqm Kama Umrat	(Aleppo)	1,000
Thuwar al-Sham	(Aleppo)	1,000
Jabhat al-Asala wal Tanmiya	(Qalamoun, Homs, Hama, Aleppo)	5,000
Al-Jabhat al-Shamiya	(Aleppo)	2,500
Kataib Nour al-Din al-Zinki	(Aleppo)	1,500
Faylaq al-Rahman	(Damascus)	2,000
Faylaq al-Sham	(Homs, Hama, Idlib, Aleppo)	4,000
Al-Ittihad al-Islami Ajnad al-Sham	(Damascus)	3,000

I made the second amazing discovery when I read an article in *Socialist Resistance* No 80 by Joseph Daher. He is a “Syrian-Swiss Marxist intellectual with a PhD in Development at the University of SOAS, London.” Learned his trade at the knee of Gilbert Achcar maybe?

In that very long article he utterly fails to find anything wrong with what he calls “the West” except they are failing in their duty to assist “the revolution” adequately. For example: “the absence or lack of any kind of “large” organised and decisive military assistance of the USA and/or Western states to the Syrian revolutionaries is another proof of the lack of will for any radical change (!!!) in Syria.” US finance capital only wants the best for Syria, what serious ‘Marxist’ could question their motives in that war?

And “We should support the provision and delivery of arms with no political conditions attached (!!!) from the West to democratic sections of the FSA.” They (the ‘moderates’ whom Comrade Pitt has endorsed above) are not opposed to any solution at all but merely assert that “any kind of ‘realistic solution’ in the medium and long term cannot include Assad and other criminals with blood on their hands.” And he complains bitterly about “the absence of any clear policy from Western powers to assist the revolutionaries in Syria.” The revolutionary ‘Marxists’ comrades of SR highlight this. Would these ‘Western powers’ by any chance be US-dominated global finance capital, ‘Marxist’ Comrade Daher? Lenin’s Imperialism’, anyone?

The essential message from these diatribes, if we leave aside a few pseudo-leftist phrases, would not be out of place in a far right Neo-Con propaganda sheet. ▲



Bob Pitt, from Islamophobia Watch.

### Caupo from Lyon, France says:

I am used to this kind of pro-imperialists arguments. They came, here in France, from the NPA, a staunch supporter of the US aggression against the Syrian government using these so-called “resistance fighters” and “Marxists” to promote the US and French imperialist plans in the region. This “intellectual” man, Mr Daher, is one of their main “sources” and inspirer.

In fact, in their traitorous reasoning Mr Daher, ‘forget’ the main problem. That all those so called “rebels” and “opposition” are the stooges of imperialism or their fellow travellers. The so called Free Syrian Army is a construction of the French imperialism and has very little importance in the field. It is just a political justification for the plans of French and US imperialism in Syria.

Mr Daher is an intellectual supporter of...this French intervention. He disguised itself as a “Marxist” but it would be very stupid to take his word for it, he is just another imperialist ‘intellectual’ puppet. The FSA is at most a very little pro-French and US pro-capitalist movement.

I do not understand why this rotten prose is published in your site that has till now supported the people of Syria in his long and heroic fight against a coalition of imperialist powers and its puppets states and the fundamentalist murderers they support.

These are enemies and there are criminal arguments don’t need the only tribune that can be used to promote the real situation and the real reasons of the crimes that are happening in Syria and the region and today with plans by the imperialists to escalate the war, using as ‘justification’ the crimes their creatures have committed in Paris.



Joseph Daher, member of the Revolutionary Left Current of (but not in?) Syria.

# Socialist Fight Statement on the bombing of Syria

**10-10-15**

We unequivocally oppose the imperialist bombing of Syria and Iraq to defeat the IS, to defend the Kurds or other nationalities or for any other reason they give. We recognise as always that the main enemy is at home, and we are for the defeat of our own ruling class in this war. We know that US-dominated global imperialism is the enemy of the global working class and oppressed and any 'humanitarian' short-term benefit that might accrue from bombing operations for Kurdish or other minority rights only covers up for the longer-term strategic aims of Imperialism in this region and everywhere else.

This aim is to overthrow all governments and movements that present even the smallest opposition to the dominations of their great finance houses and their allied global transnational corporations. Right now the strategic aims are regime change to seize control of Syria, Iran, the Donbass region of Ukraine, Venezuela, the deformed workers' states of Cuba and North Korea and ultimately regime change and break up of Russia and China.

But confusion arises in rapidly changing situations when US-sponsored proxy armies fail to behave according to plan, 'blowback' happens and yesterday's ally becomes today's enemy. This had been the story repeatedly with the fundamentalists militias sponsored by the CIA in Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa. The Mujahedeen allies in Afghanistan against the Soviets became the Taliban and Al Qaeda opponents of the US War on Terror after 9/11 2001. The US sponsored Jihadists in Libya and Syria became the IS opponents there and in Iraq and Syria. When IS emerged it was initially supported by the US and Israel to overthrow Assad but it developed its own agenda. It wants to build a region-wide Caliphate including the Kurdish oil-rich province of Iraq and Kurdish Syria. Although supported by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf reactionary regimes it nonetheless came into conflict with US strategic and economic interests in the region.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism like the Taliban, Al Qaeda and IS is fundamentally caused by the reactionary nature of imperialism itself and its methods of defending and expanding its influences. However the rise of Islamic fundamentalist reaction in Afghanistan in the 1980s and in the Middle East and North Africa since is partly a consequence of the bureaucratic and reactionary methods of struggle of Stalinism against reaction historically in the degenerate and deformed workers' states and the bourgeois nationalists in semi-colonial countries. There is no political attempts to liberate the oppressed peasants and women from the domination of the landlords and misogynist Mullahs. Mass indiscriminate bombings causes big civilian casualties and consolidates their hold over them.

Both Stalinism historically and bourgeois nationalists are 'anti-imperialist' through necessity only when they are under economic or military attack either directly by imperialism itself or by its proxy forces. Joseph Stalin pioneered this 'anti-imperialist' ideology whose apogee was the wartime 'anti-fascist' bloc with Roosevelt and Churchill. The essence of this popular front alliance was to prevent the victory of revolutions after WWII as we had seen in the Russian Revolution after WWI. The aim of the struggles by these forces are always to avoid an existential political struggle with imperialism itself and to seek a better settlement with it, a 'peaceful coexistence'. They seek to persuade imperialism that they will be its best regional representatives if only they are allowed:



**President Bashar al-Assad: targeting of Syria shows Moscow gives priority to strengthening Damascus against near enemies rather than striking Islamic State. Photograph: Sana via Reuters**

1. The latitude to enjoy their own corrupt privileges in the case of the remaining Stalinist regimes in Cuba and North Korea. The Castro brothers in Cuba and Kim Jong-un in North Korea continue to seek settlements with imperialism that maintain their own privileges whilst conducting no global struggle against it. Nevertheless we defend the gains of the workers and oppressed in these deformed workers' states and fight for political and not social revolutions there.

2. The semi-colonial bourgeoisie also seek a settlement with imperialism to allow them to exploit their own working class and oppressed people on their own terms in closer alliance with global imperialism. Assad, Putin and the Donbass leaders are seeking a deal with imperialism to sell out the struggles that is now forced upon them.

Only revolutionary Trotskyism has a coherent programme of struggle and an integrated worldwide ideology to defeat imperialism on a global scale; that programme is Permanent Revolution allied with the Anti-Imperialist United Front as one coherent strategy. Our anti-imperialism has nothing in common with Stalinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois third world anti-imperialism which seeks only its own national and regional privileges. This is fundamentally opposed to mobilising the working class as a global force to overthrow capitalism in world revolution, the only ultimate solution to all national problems. Permanent Revolution as theorised by Trotsky after 1927 and the Anti-Imperialist United Front as elaborated by the revolutionary Comintern up to 1922 are united in the Transitional Programme and the method that flows from that as outlined by Trotsky in 1938. Front as elaborated by the revolutionary Comintern up to 1922 and its development, the Transitional Programme and the method that flows from that as outlined by Trotsky in 1938.

It is clear from this analysis that, whilst we must support Assad and Russia against imperialism and its puppets the approach to Islamic fundamentalism is so bureaucratic and brutal that there is no hope that Assad can win the allegiance of the rural Sunni population now.

## What is the current political line-up?

Russia's deployment of war planes, missile systems, tanks, and armoured troop carriers has dramatically changed the shape of the conflict on the ground in Syria and stepped up political pressure on western and Arab governments to come to terms with president Bashar al-Assad.

Russia's airstrikes have altered the situation because they have been against sites where Syrian military forces are under pressure

# The Russian intervention in Syria and Permanent Revolution

Socialist Fight Minority Statement By Ian Donovan

**T**he most important starting point for us in imperialist Britain should be that the main enemy is at home, and we are for the defeat of our own ruling class in this situation.

We should be acutely aware also that our own ruling class is currently at war, in the sense of bombing, with the forces of Islamic State. It is not currently at war with Assad, though it is pretty obvious that the Western imperialists would like to be rid of both Assad and Islamic State. The earlier attempt at war against Assad failed; and then was eclipsed by the fall of Mosul and the rise of IS.

Our own government is planning to begin bombing IS in Syria shortly and is trying to split the Parliamentary Labour Party over just this question. The US has been doing this openly for months, Britain has also engaged in drone killings of some IS Jihadists of British origin without parliamentary approval, which it is seeking now as a cover. The UK joined the US to start bombing IS in Iraq with Labour support just over a year ago, but the Labour leadership that sanctioned that has now been replaced with a left-wing leader who is a key figure in the anti-war movement. Obviously the Labour Party is split over this, Corbyn opposes both the Iraq bombing and the Syria extension, many of the New Labour elements will certainly support it.

There is not currently an imperialist proposal to attack Assad; the rise of IS has made that unfeasible for now. When a proposal to bomb Assad *was* on the table, in 2013, it failed both in Britain and the USA because it lacked enough bourgeois support. Labour under Ed Miliband moved the technical amendment that blocked it and the Tories and Lib Dems were insufficiently united to be able to overrule that, despite their government having pushed through the earlier attack on Libya. Obama then responded to this by calling off the mooted attack, having been deprived of British political cover.

Indeed one of Cameron's anxieties is that his defeat in 2013 over bombing Assad could affect his ability to get a vote through parliament authorising bombing IS. Which is probably not true, as an attack on IS does have enough New Labour and bourgeois support.

It is certain that were a similar proposal to attack Assad to be put today, it would get even less support. Why? Because of the aftermath of the overthrow of Qaddafi, among other things. It was a pyrrhic victory that actually destabilised much of North and West Africa, but not to the benefit of imperialism. It has strengthened anti-Western Islamic trends from Libya all the way to Nigeria, and caused such grave internal misgivings as to give them second thoughts about trying the same with Assad. That's why they could not pull it off. That's one very good reason why the idea that IS is in some way their tool against Assad is wrong.

There has been recently a degree of pressure, from the logic of the situation, on the imperialists to make a tacit deal with Assad against Islamic State. This is the context of the Russian bombing. There are two aspects to this, the first being that Russia wants to ensure Assad's survival as the regime is looking more and more unsteady, and therefore wants to defeat the forces fighting it. One of which is IS. The others are a melange of smaller groups, some of whom are remnants of those Islamist and other forces that were directly proxies of the US, who have been squeezed between Assad and IS. Putin and Assad are at war with both of these sets of forces.

But Putin also wants a bloc with the West to defeat IS. Particularly in the context of the US/Iran deal and its passing through Congress, he sees a window of opportunity to do this in the fag end of Obama's lame duck term, before the next president tears it up, which looks highly likely.

Given that Putin claims to be fighting IS, but our own govern-

from anti-regime insurgents linked to or co-operating with al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, or locations hosting concentrations of Russian rebel Chechen fighters.

This strategic targeting shows Moscow gives priority to strengthening Damascus against near enemies rather than striking Islamic State. Furthermore, by hitting al-Nusra and its allies, which have the support of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Russia has made it clear al-Qaeda is not off-limits and cannot be considered part of the "moderate" camp.

Russia's involvement coincides with shifts in the positions of key Arab and western governments. The hardliners in the anti-Assad camp are Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, France, the expatriate National Coalition and insurgent groups. Last week, however, following a meeting in Moscow with Russia's president Vladimir Putin, his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan conceded Assad could be involved in transition negotiations. This was later dismissed by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, architect of Turkey's increasingly unpopular anti-Assad campaign launched in 2011.

Under pressure to end the Syrian war in light of the refugee crisis in Europe, the US, UK and other European countries have moved



from the hardline camp. The US and Britain contend Assad cannot "be part of Syria's future" but may not have to step down before talks on a transition begin. Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel calls for talks with "many actors", including Assad, the US, Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia. This places Germany between the weakening US/UK and the pro-Assad camp which consists of Russia, Iran, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Iraq and Egypt. Last week Iraq formed a joint command centre with Russia, Syria and Iran to share data on IS. [1]

- No support for Imperialist bombing of IS in Syria!
- Critical support for Russian military assistance to Assad!

#### Note

[1] Michael Jansen: *West and Arab states being forced to rethink Assad, Military action by Moscow places political pressure on other players*, [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/west-and-arab-states-being-forced-to-rethink-assad-1.2379834#utm\\_sguid=159148,2f34bf83-2946-14c4-8f93-8e077bfee23](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/west-and-arab-states-being-forced-to-rethink-assad-1.2379834#utm_sguid=159148,2f34bf83-2946-14c4-8f93-8e077bfee23) ▲

ment is *definitely* at war with IS, and both the Tories and the Blairite right are trying to get parliamentary endorsement for bombing of IS in Syria, it would be wrong to endorse Putin's war against IS. Putin has been talking about a repeat of the WWII alliance with the West against Hitler, this time against IS. But this is doubly bad for us as anti-Stalinist Marxists; we were opposed to the Popular Front of the working class led by the Stalinists with Churchill and Roosevelt, let alone a latter day version with Russia (no longer 'communist' even in name) with Obama, Cameron and Hollande.

Our position in the current wars should be to continue to oppose attacks on IS, and to support the defence of those forces against imperialism. Insofar as Putin makes (in his own words) a WWII style bloc with the West against IS, we should defend IS also against Putin and Assad. IS is not Hitler's Germany, it is a non-imperialist force, that has actually inflicted defeats on some imperialist proxies, particularly in Iraq.

Insofar as there is a breakdown of relations between the West and Putin, on the other hand, and a recrudescence of Western imperialist threats against Assad/Putin takes place, tending towards a proxy war, then we should shift our stance towards a defence of Assad as well as IS. But it is not clear that at the moment, this is how things will move. The Western powers are seriously antagonistic to both Assad and IS, but they are currently at war only with IS. We have to concretely oppose the imperialist attacks on IS, we cannot retreat from that on the basis of some sort of drift towards endorsing a latter day WWII coalition.

This does abstract from whether Russia should be considered imperialist, or not. This is a complex and problematic question and there may a need for further examination of the nature of Russia even going back to pre-revolutionary times in fully resolving this question. But even if Russia is not considered imperialist, the West is not currently at war with Russia over Syria; it is at war with IS over both Syria and Iraq.

These are the issues of principle; it also seems doubtful whether Putin's action will succeed, as he, like the West, had ruled out ground troops, fearing a quagmire no doubt as does the West. Bombing on its own is not that effective against irregular forces; the West's more hi-tech bombing campaign against IS has not been very effective.

The relations of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar with Al Nusra and to a lesser extent IS are reflective of the tendency to a bourgeois Sunni-Shia conflict that is another strand of what is happening in the region. But it is mistaken to see this simply as a reflection of imperialist interests per se. These forces have their own dynamics and their own limited agency. A Sunni-Shia conflict that may demolish all the coherent states in the region is something that suits Israel quite well, weakening and dividing all Israel's opponents and potential opponents in the region, but Israel is the only imperialist state with such an objective material interest in region-wide chaos. This is because it a tenuous alien formation build on land everyone else in the region regards as stolen. It is a unique imperialist state in that regard. Objectively and rationally, the interests of the US would be in building alliances with conservative client states that have some stability and staying power, as they do elsewhere in the world. The same is true of the UK, as the US' junior partner, and indeed the EU is not that different. It is the peculiar role of Zionist influence in the imperialist countries to make such an imperialist strategy impossible. Which is actually why imperialist policy appears incoherent.



Given that Putin claims to be fighting IS, but our own government is *definitely* at war with IS, and both the Tories and the Blairite right are trying to get parliamentary endorsement for bombing of IS in Syria, it would be wrong to endorse Putin's war against IS.

All these are points of analysis that are crucial in understanding what is happening in the current highly unstable and dangerous situation in the Middle East. But what should guide us above all is the theory and programme of Permanent Revolution. We critically defend all non-imperialist forces that come into military conflict with imperialism, whether secular despotisms like Assad's, or Islamist forces such as IS. This does not involve one iota of political confidence in any of them. We rather stand by the understanding developed by Trotsky after the failed Chinese revolution of 1926-27, that only the programme of Permanent Revolution can bring liberation and real democracy to semi-colonial peoples oppressed by imperialism. Since all of the important countries of the Arab and Muslim Middle East, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Saudi Arabia, have potentially powerful proletariats, our perspective must involve seeking independent working class mobilisations in line with this perspective:

"Does this at least mean that every country, including the most backward colonial country, is ripe, if not for socialism, then for the dictatorship of the proletariat? No, this is not what it means. Then what is to happen with the democratic revolution in general – and in the colonies in particular? Where is it written – I answer the question with another question – that every colonial country is ripe for the immediate and thoroughgoing solution of its national democratic tasks? The question must be approached from the other end. Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses. In 1905, the proletariat of Russia did not prove strong enough to unite the peasant masses around it and to conquer power. For this very reason, the revolution halted midway, and then sank lower and lower. In China, where, in spite of the exceptionally favourable situation, the leadership of the Communist International prevented the Chinese proletariat from fighting for power, the national tasks found a wretched, unstable and niggardly solution in the regime of the Kuomintang."

Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, 7. *What Does the Slogan of the Democratic Dictatorship Mean Today for the East?* 1930 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/pr07.htm> ▲

# The Morning Star and Denis Healey

**Obituary comment by Gerry Downing**

Denis Healey died on 3 October aged 98, “the greatest leader the Labour party never had” they all tell us. Leaders of the British establishment paid him fulsome tribute. The Morning Star reported his death on 5 October with the headline: “Tributes pour in for ‘no-nukes’ Healey”. Jeremy Corbyn’s assertion that he was “a Labour giant whose record of service to party and country stands as his testament” leaves a little to be desired. Like Jeremy Healey too had once said that he would never have authorised the use of nuclear weapons when he was defence secretary, according to the MS. CND general secretary Kate Hudson concurred and MS further report Jeremy Corbyn as saying “Labour is built on people with commitment of those who devote their lives to public service, as Denis Healey did.”

Healey was a vicious right wing reactionary, an enemy of the working class and of socialism, a staunch defender of the right of British imperialism to plunder the world for profit and to suppress all who opposed this “right” by extreme violence when necessary for most of his life. He fully supported the war of British imperialism against the oppressed nationalists of the six counties in the north of Ireland in and out of government. He also authorised the expulsion of Chagossians from the Chagos Archipelago, and authorised building of the United States military base at Diego Garcia. The appalling racist bigotry with which this heinous crime was committed by Healey’s agent is explained in a Wikipedia article:

“In a memo dating from this period, Colonial Office head Denis Greenhill (later Lord Greenhill of Harrow) wrote to the British Delegation at the UN: ‘The object of the exercise is to get some rocks which will remain ours; there will be no indigenous population except seagulls who have not yet got a committee. Unfortunately, along with the seagulls go some few Tarzans and Man Fridays that are hopefully being wished on Mauritius.’ Depopulation of Chagossians from the Chagos Archipelago, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depopulation\\_of\\_Chagossians\\_from\\_the\\_Chagos\\_Archipelago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depopulation_of_Chagossians_from_the_Chagos_Archipelago)

He explained Labour’s defeat in the 1983 election in an interview in Marxism Today in April, 1986:

“The reason we were defeated in so far as defence played a role is that people believe we were in favour of unilaterally disarming ourselves. It wasn’t the confusion. It was the unilateralism that was the damaging thing.”

Despite some famous attacks on Margaret Thatcher he strongly admired her as did almost all Labour’s right wing:

“He was advised early on to watch out for the up-and-coming Thatcher by an MP friend who knew her well. ‘He said, ‘She’s good-looking but she’s also politically brilliant.’ He was right.” Denis Healey: “Thatcher was good-looking and brilliant” New Statesman, 26 March 2013, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk-politics/2013/03/thatcher-was-good-looking-and-brilliant>

That Healey considered the anti-social ignorant bigot Thatcher “politically brilliant” says it all. Healey joined the Communist Party in 1937 and resigned in 1940. On 5 October Roger Bagley wrote his obituary for the Morning Star with a strap that tells us that he was: “a thorn in the side of the party left – yet sided with them when it came to Blair’s war crimes.”

Bagley proudly boasts of Healey’s commitment to Joe Stalin:



Healey's 1945 election poster, he was obviously genuinely moved by socialist ideals like many of his post-war generation at the time.

“He joined the Communist Party in 1937, inspired by the party’s anti-fascism and the republican struggle for democracy in the Spanish civil war. Healey was a leading member of the party at Oxford and became treasurer of the October Club, which was the Communist section of the Oxford University Labour Club. He was an ardent defender of the party line. One of his former college comrades recalled how Healey discovered him reading Trotsky’s book *The History of the Russian Revolution*. Healey stormed into the room, roared that he must stop reading the book, and threatened to have him drummed out of the party for daring to look at a book by “that traitor Trotsky”.

Whether he was also inspired by Stalin’s mass murder of all the surviving leaders and participants in the Russian Revolution during that period, his Popular Front policy of collaborating with the ‘democratic imperialists’ and the consequent mass murder of the Spanish Trotskyists, Poumists (POUM – ex-Trotskyists United Marxist Workers party) and anarchists by the same NKVD that were so zealously executing the left who lead and fought in the Russian Revolution in the USSR in their hundreds of thousands he do not tell us. But the reference to “that traitor Trotsky” is surely intended to indicate that this was the case and that comrade Begley approves.

We do not know why he resigned from the CPGB in 1940 (before or after the fall of France in June 1940), following the Hitler-Stalin pact of August 1939, but the infamous Nazi-defending *Daily Worker* editorial of 1 February, commenting on Hitler’s speech a few weeks before would, have been very difficult to defend from the standpoint of a true British patriot like Healey:

“Hitler repeated once again his claim that the war was thrust upon him by Britain. *Against the historical fact there can be no reply*. Britain declared war, attempts were made to end the war. But the *Soviet German* peace overtures were rejected by Britain. All through these months the British and French Governments have had the power to end the war. They have chosen to extend it... *War should never have been declared on September 3, there should have been negotiations and peace talks?* (our emphasis).

This is clearly at odds with his position as revealed in his autobiography *The Time of My Life*, on why joined the CPGB:

“For the young in those days, politics was a world of simple choices. The enemy was Hitler with his concentration camps. The objective was to prevent a war by standing up to Hitler. Only the Communist Party seemed unambiguously against Hitler. The Chamberlain Government was for appeasement. Labour seemed torn between pacifism and a half-hearted support for collective security, and the Liberals did not count.”

Bagley, who seems to have plagiarised a great chunk of his obituary from the *Spartacus Educational* on Healey: <http://spartacus-educational.com/PRhealeyD.htm>, goes on to tell us:

“His former Communist comrades were surprised when he suddenly appeared at the Labour Party conference at the end of WWII in 1945. In his army uniform, the 28-year-old Healey strode to the conference rostrum and hailed “the socialist revolution that has already begun in Europe.”

It would seem from the report of his speech at the Labour Conference in May 1945 in Spartacus Educational that he was now genuinely motivated by reformist socialist, if clearly not by revolutionary ideals, as were a vast number of his generation post-war:

"The upper classes in every country are selfish, depraved, dissolute and decadent. The struggle for socialism in Europe ... has been hard, cruel, merciless and bloody. The penalty for participation in the liberation movement has been death for oneself, if caught, and, if not caught oneself, the burning of one's home and the death by torture of one's family ... Remember that one of the prices paid for our survival during the last five years has been the death by bombardment of countless thousands of innocent European men and women."

His narrow minded dogmatism quickly reasserted itself, however. Harold Wilson aptly summed him up in his *Memoirs: 1916-1964*:

"I made Denis Healey Minister of Defence. He is a strange person. When he was at Oxford he was a communist. Then friends took him in hand, sent him to the Rand Corporation of America, where he was brainwashed and came back very right wing. But his method of thinking was still what it had been: in other words, the absolute certainty that he was right and everybody else was wrong, and not merely wrong through not knowing the proper answers, but wrong through malice."

His patriotism quickly defeated his post war socialism and his sub-



**Harold Wilson summed up Healey's dogmatism very well.**

sequent battles against the left in the Labour party and the working class in general after his election to parliament in 1952, beginning with his alliance with Hugh Gaitskell against Aneurin Bevan, are well known.

The MS ran their obituary by Roger Bagley to Healey on the same day as their 'tribute'. He was a "though bruiser of a politician who fought against the left in the Labour party but ended up a critic of Tony Blair." But "he started his political life as a fervent communist and admirer of the Soviet Union".

So he started off well, degenerated but in the end saved his political soul by opposing Blair, comrade Bagley would have us believe. Well almost because "In the recent Labour leadership election, Healey once again rejected left-wing policies and supported Yvette Cooper." But "He nevertheless remained a proud member of the Labour Party right to the end of his

long and eventful life." So one of us really, even though we had a few falling outs on the way.

Dead wrong. The historical judgement on him is he was a right wing Labour traitor to the working class and to socialism. ▲

## Rojava—US imperialism is the main enemy; critical support for the Kurdish anarchostalinists **Comment by Tony Fox**

The Kurdish PYD/YPG (the political wing, the *Democratic Union Party*, PYD, the military, the *People's Protection Units*, YPG) in Rojava, the Syrian Kurdish enclave, is allied with the US and others in this war. However they 'forget' that the US supports Turkey bombing them and the PKK (Turkish Kurds military wing) and agrees with Turkish President Erdogan that they cannot cross the Euphrates to cut IS supply routes at Jarabulus.

The US were granted the full use of the Incirlik Air Base in reward. Turkey is a strategic ally of the US, the YPG is merely a temporary and opportunist ally, to be abandoned as soon as it is expedient.

This statement by the PYD is apparently enormously politically naive:

"By doing this (bombing the PKK/YPG) Turkey has not only encouraged the (IS) gangs to resist, but also intended to make NATO and Russia confront each other through a provocation, hinder a joint action by the U.S. and Russia for the building of a new Syria, and relieve IS."

We should not forget that the PYD, like its mother organization the PKK in Turkey, lacks democratic processes in its internal functioning and in relation to other organizations considered to be rivals, or who are merely critical of it. We still support the Kurdish right to self-determination and we demand the PKK is removed from lists of terrorist organizations.

Clearly a very exciting revolutionary thing is happening at the base here in Kobanî and the surrounding area of Rojava. This method of self-administration respects the rights of women, and religious and ethnic minorities in the

areas they control.

But there are very credible reports of horrendous massacres and ethnic cleansing by YPG militias when they take villages that they suspect of supporting IS. So this freedom has very definite territorial and political limits; the tops ultimately decide everything.

The PYD/YPG have thwarted the plans of US/Israeli imperialism directly to control Rojava by infiltrating the region with the forces of the Iraqi Kurdish puppet leader Masoud Barzani. But, in the Stalinist tradition, they also suppress the left, they allow no leftist opponents to operate within 'their' territory and prevent them from participating in the ruling institutions. Without a global strategy, without identifying the main enemy of all humanity, US dominated finance capital, it cannot advance either regionally or internationally.

Still in the midst of all the anti imperialist united fronts we must defend and develop the programme for human liberation. And in Kobanî that is surely there in embryo and developing. What serious socialist would not be inspired by the women there and understand that something very important was happening for the world revolution? But the base cannot triumph without capturing and overthrowing the superstructure, regionally and globally.

So is the PKK/YPG creed Stalinist or Anarchist? PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan imbibed the teachings of sociologist Murray Bookchin (ex-Stalinist, ex-Trotskyist, ex-Anarchist) in his Turkish jail and became an anarchostalinist, a



**The whole world is talking about us Kurdish women**

bizarre urban Maoist-type dogma. [1]

Tactically we support Assad and Putin against the USA and its proxies but critically, they are bourgeois and not socialist. Like-wise critical support for Kurdish anarchostalinists.

### Note

[1] Anarchostalinist, an evolution of Anarchism and Stalinism. Anarchostalinists reject the dogmatism, inertia, impotence and gesturism of anarchism, and merge their anti-authoritarian and anti-statist views with a hard-line on anti-social criminals, drug pushers and the landowners. Could be seen as a 21st century urban Maoism. Rejects the automatic anti-Sovietism of liberal anarchists. Likes show-trials, tanks and rocket parades.

"Politicians? Shoot the bloody lot of them. It'd be better if Uncle Joe was still around...";  
"You're just a bloody anarchostalinist";  
"Better than being an effete bean" (an ineffective intellectual poseur).  
By John 21-10-2006, Urban Dictionary <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=anarchostalinist> ▲

# The imperialist rape of the Congo: the Longest Genocide

By Ailish Dease

**T**he Kingdom of the Congo, (an area the size of Western Europe) had first contact with Europeans during the late fifteenth century when Portuguese traders arrived and gradually began fomenting strife in different parts of the kingdom, until it had disintegrated into a mass of mini states locked in unending conflict. The prisoners from these wars contributed to the numbers of people shipped across the seas to the Americas to become slaves.

In 1885 at the Berlin Conference Africa was carved up by the imperialists. During the early colonial period, most of Africa was free, the slave 'trade' being a coastal matter. But after 1885, the thugs would move inland and take over. Germany got four large areas, South West Africa, now called Namibia. Togo, Cameroon and Tanzania. The Germans would rehearse for Nazism on African bodies in Africa (Namibia).

The Belgians would in the next ten years reduce the population of the Congo from 31 million to ten million. The greatest single holocaust in the 20th century in numbers was the destruction of the Congo. Nobody lifted any voices against that holocaust that started 500 years ago *and is still in progress*.

It is important to remember that Colonialism was justified on a premise that Africans were less than human (1865 'Code Noir') written in the US constitution as three fifths of a human. So at this time when only the aristocrats in Europe/US could read and write, it was necessary to portray the enslaved Africans as being unable to read or write their native languages and without advanced skills, such as building skills, farming etc. skills used to build the US and the Caribbean colonies. If the colonisers acknowledged their skills it would be difficult for them to maintain that Africans were less than human.

Henry Morton Stanley 'explorer' (knighted by Britain and elected to Parliament) made two trips to Africa in 1869 and 1874, when he 'attacked and destroyed 28 large towns and 2-4 score villages' (his words) as he pillaged and plundered his way into Africa.

Every imperialist intervention in history has been disguised as 'humanitarian'. Leopold claimed that his intervention in the Congo was 'to put an end to Arab slavery'. The historical record shows that there was no such threat and that Leopold proceeded to enslave the people of Congo himself. Stanley again travelled to Africa in 1879, this time on commission from King Leopold II to colonise the Congo for him. Leopold took Congo as his personal property, robbed and murdered its people to build Belgium and enrich himself. After Stanley left for England in 1884 Leopold then sent in hordes of thugs to terrorise the people and ship out the wealth. (See Adam Hochschild 'King Leopold's ghost')

Initially the Europeans were mainly interested in the ivory but then an Irishman John Dunlop, accidentally discovered how to make an inflated rubber tire for his bicycle. He set up a tyre company, named after himself, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Rubber became the new gold. Wild rubber was all over Congo, but tapping it was very difficult. People who refused to gather rubber for the Belgians had their right hand chopped off.

The French, Germans, Belgians, looted the Congo and the Belgians collected the severed hands of the Congolese as trophies in their mission to pillage the rubber resource of the Con-

go. The violence continued unabated until the population declined so much that labour was not as available and killing people meant less profits. It was the decline in profits that reduced the killings.

Today all over Belgium there are monuments to the mass murderer Leopold, which continues to remind us of the suffering and horror and is irrefutable evidence of their lack of remorse. How would the world respond to a statue of Hitler in Germany?

The Congo is still traumatised and psychologically destroyed and unable to recover from these atrocities and the 100-300 million Africans deported and killed en-route to the Americas in the Transatlantic deportations.

The Belgian Government was forced to 'buy' Congo from Leopold because his crimes were exposed by Sir Roger Casement's report to the British Parliament.

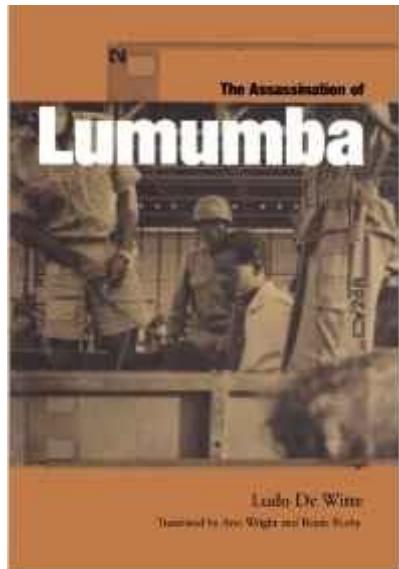
The mass murderer Leopold (like the Slave holders in the Americas) was paid 50 million Francs 'as a mark of gratitude for his great sacrifices for the Congo'. So once again we see that evil is profitable and goes unpunished.

Today the resources that are the root of Congo's suffering are Uranium, Coltan, Gold, Diamonds Tin, Copper etc. Congo is arguably the richest place on earth, in terms of the strategic minerals under the earth there, which are necessary for the functioning of modern society particularly in the technology sector, e.g., Coltan is a necessary ingredient in laptops, smart phones etc. Coltan is mined in Congo by virtual slaves who work just for a meal, have no protective garments to protect them from the toxic and radioactive minerals and so will certainly die of cancer due to this exposure; not to mention the pollution of the environment and the poisoning of the water table, caused by mining these toxic minerals.

Recently released documents show that after Independence, Belgium and the CIA assassinated the first democratically elected President of Congo, Patrice Lumumba. They installed a corrupt dictator and puppet Mobutu who systematically stole the country's wealth. (See *The Assassination of Lumumba* by Ludo de Witte) (*Chief of Station Congo* by Larry Devlin)

Since 1996 there has been a (proxy war- US & Britain using Rwanda and Uganda) resource war waged in the Congo and over 6 million people have died (UN Report Dec. 12 2008 - *Congo, Deadliest Conflict since World War II*) yet it is almost never mentioned in the news because Western Corporations are benefiting from the slaughter in Congo.

The imperialists cannot afford for Africa to be united so they have disrupted all African nations so that they can continue to plunder African resources. ▲



# SA's Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters – Red or Pink?

**By Weizmann Hamilton**

Socialist Fight is pleased to republish this article by comrade Weizmann exposing the reformist defence of capitalism and bogus ‘socialism’ of EFF leader Julius Malema. It might seem trite to mention the lack of internationalist perspective in the article but its importance lies in the very big numbers of trade union and community militants who follow the ideology of left Stalinism.

Left Stalinists are often the best militants in SA and whilst they will be very susceptible to Trotskyist propaganda about the benefits of overthrowing capitalism and planning the economy they tend to dismiss the last element of the theory of Permanent Revolution. Trotsky believed world revolution was necessary for real socialism anywhere and that a workers’ state would not be able to hold out against the pressures of a hostile capitalist world unless socialist revolutions quickly took hold internationally.

This theory was advanced in opposition to the position held by the Stalinist faction within the Bolshevik Party of “socialism in one country” and the theory of “stages” in revolutions—first bourgeois-democratic and later a socialist revolution.

In practice for Stalinists, from Mandela to Zuma and now Malema, that second stage was never now. It was on this basis that Zuma massacred the Marikana miners and the South African Communist party supported him. We are sure comrade Weizmann makes these points elsewhere but we think it is always necessary to put polemics in that context given the history of betrayal of the ANC and the SACP precisely with this defence.

Weizmann Hamilton is a Marxist and General Secretary of the Workers and Socialist Party. WASP works closely with the Socialist Youth Movement which is working towards unifying students nationally in a Free Education Movement. WASP is represented on the Steering Committee of the Movement for Socialism and the National Coordinating Committee of the United Front.

The EFF’s march to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange has made headlines. It has bolstered its claims as a force on the Left prepared to speak truth to power – in this case to White Monopoly Capital. But a closer scrutiny of Commander-in-Chief (CIC), Julius Malema’s, remarks show that underneath the radical rhetoric, the true colours of the EFF’s socialism are becoming apparent.

Estimates of its size vary (from 50,000 to as low as 8,000) but, whatever the actual numbers, the 15km march, from Johannesburg to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in Sandton, SA’s new seat of financial power, would have reinforced the fears of big business about the fate of their wealth in a political future in which, as the ANC’s power declines, the EFF appears set to play a more influential role.

In his customary radical rhetoric, *Moneyweb Today* (28/10/15) reports that Malema berated business shouting: “Down with capitalism! Down with the racist JSE!” In front of cheering supporters dressed in red party T-shirts and waving “capitalism sucks” banners a finger-wagging Malema shouted at a group of white businessmen standing on the JSE balcony: “You bloody racists. It is the ANC who has spoiled you. Your days are numbered.”

Following Malema’s appearance before the American Chamber of Commerce September 29 breakfast briefing, the discussion leader described the EFF CIC’s address as “chilling and charming”. JSE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nicky Newton-King would have felt the same feeling running down her spine as she accepted the memorandum and thanked “comrade Malema” for making the ef-

fort to come, assuring him that SA had taken notice.

Whilst all serious revolutionary socialists would have cheered along with the crowd at the dressing down the capitalists so rightfully deserved, our evaluation of the EFF’s politics cannot be guided by the fears of the bosses. Following the EFF’s impressive show of strength at the JSE, the commentariat of the capitalist media has been hard at work, pouring their usual scorn on the idea that any policies other than those promoting the free market are at best fanciful; any economic system other than capitalism downright dangerous. The EFF has been painted by the paranoid capitalist media as socialist, red in tooth and claw, a threat to bourgeois “civilisation” and much worse.

## EFF policies -- revolutionary or reformist?

Genuine socialists must judge the EFF’s policies by whether they constitute a programme for the emancipation of the working class through the socialist transformation of society – the only way out of the impasse capitalism has created for society, one of grotesque inequalities, structural unemployment, denial of access to decent education and health care, chronic corruption, environmental degradation, ethnic, racial, national and religious strife and war. For genuine socialists the choice before humanity is socialism or the barbarism of capitalism.

The list of demands the EFF handed to the JSE CEO appear revolutionary not because they will bring about a radical redistribution of wealth or the eradication of capitalism. They seem so mainly because of the extremely rapacious nature of SA capitalism.

SA’s hideous inequalities are reflected in the fact that just two people -- Nicky Oppenheimer and Johann Rupert -- own as much wealth as the bottom 50% of society put together; in the fact that it would take the average worker in the platinum industry 300 years to earn what a CEO earns in one year; in the fact that 54% live in poverty; in the fact that 15m go to bed hungry every night; in the fact that 500,000 children with disabilities are not accommodated in the schooling system; in the fact that the Zuma government remains



Malema’s revolutionary rhetoric toned down: “The EFF no longer stands for the wholesale nationalisation of the banks; it is in favour of a state bank leaving intact the domination of the SA economy by its most parasitic sector. It wants workers to be given a stake in private companies not to expropriate them.”

stubbornly committed to spending the near equivalent of the country's GDP on nuclear power stations when people are living in mud houses, when children can drown in pit latrines in schools a significant number of which lack decent sanitation, libraries, computers laboratories and sporting facilities. These are but a few of the damning statistics that make capitalism morally repugnant.

### Socialism – a superior socio-economic system

The case for socialism however, does not rest on the undoubtedly moral superiority of a society whose foundations would be built on social solidarity rather than individual competition; on the appeal of the replacement of the dog-eat-dog culture of capitalist individualism with social cooperation for the common wealth of all; on the cooperation of nations rather than the subjugation of the weaker, less developed by the militarily stronger and economically more powerful, on peace rather than war, on a society living in harmony with nature rather than the destructive exploitation of the environment; on production for social good rather than for private profit; on gender equality rather than the incessant reproduction of prejudice and bigotry towards and oppression of women, gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgender and queer people. All of these are reason enough to abolish capitalism.

Rather the case for socialism rests on its superiority as a system for the economic re-organisation of society on the basis of a democratic plan based on the full participation of society as a whole; in its capacity to utilise and release the full potential of society's productive capabilities – labour, science and technique in contrast to the colossal waste of human potential that ravages society in the form of mass unemployment, whilst productive capacity lies idle worldwide. Not since the Great Depression of the 1930s have the prospects of global capitalism looked as bleak and its inability to meet basic human needs been so clear.

### Corruption – life blood of capitalism

Capitalism's role as a gigantic barrier to human progress is graphically illustrated by the behaviour of SA's capitalist class who run the economy as near as possible to a system of organised crime. As WASP pointed out in the leaflet we distributed for the anti-corruption march: there can be no capitalism without corruption.

The Financial Transparency Coalition told Fin24 that money connected to SA hidden in Switzerland at HSCBC was more than [the total amount of money companies connected to] France, eight times higher than [the total amount connected to the] US, and 3.5 times more than [money connected to] Spain. Account holders include CEOs of blue chip companies. (BDlive (01/10/15) Cosatu's Strategy Coordinator, Neil Coleman reports that dividend payments to foreign companies in 2014 alone amounted to R163bn aggravating SA's current account deficit.

Academics estimate that between 2001 and 2007 capital flight increased from 12% to 23% of GDP – nearly a quarter of the country's wealth was stolen in one year alone. (DM 06/10/15)

No wonder *The Times* could report that "South Africa has 'the most corrupt corporate class on earth according to the business consultancy Price Water House Coopers in February 2014. In the words of *The Times*, South African management 'is the world leader in money-laundering, bribery and corruption, procurement fraud, asset misappropriation, and cybercrime', with 77 percent of all internal fraud committed by senior and middle management."

At first glance it seems rather curious that the EFF would set their demand for a minimum wage at a paltry R4,500 a month. It is well below the R12,500 for which 34 mineworkers were slaughtered at Marikana in 2012 – an amount that calculations by the Alternative Information Development Centre at the time showed was eminently reasonable if the working class majority was considered as no less entitled to a decent standard of living as the rest of



The SA student uprising and a 10,000+ march on 23 October forced Zuma to concede: "We agreed that there will be a zero increase of university fees in 2016." Universities had proposed tuition fee rises of up to 11.5% next year, arguing they need higher fees to keep up standards. Student leaders have vowed further action to push for other demands, including universal free education:

society; It is less than the R10,000 a month demanded by outsourced (now insourced) workers at the University of Cape Town. It is less than the R5,000 (a 100% increase) outsourced workers at the University of the Free State have just achieved last week after a march led by the Socialist Youth Movement.

More revealing is the reasoning behind the "radical" demand for 51% share ownership for workers in JSE listed companies. In his address to the American Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.miningweekly.com/article/eff-seeks-60-state-ownership-of-mines-govt-as-custodian-of-farmland-2015-09-29>) Malema argued against nationalisation explaining that one way of countering it would be to offer mine workers shareholding in mining operations. "How can the EFF nationalise a mine if the workers own 50%?" If workers were shareholders, they would acknowledge that their performance was linked to a dividend, leading them to work "for their bosses, as well as for themselves". "They would know that if they go on strike, their bonuses would not be thousands [of rands], but hundreds [of rands]." From a party that set itself apart from and in opposition to the ANC by committing itself unequivocally to nationalisation, the policy the ANC has abandoned, the EFF is now offering advice to the bosses on how to "counter" nationalisation. This is a strike breakers charter masquerading as worker empowerment.

### EFF policy evolves into programme of black capitalists

The hysteria in the capitalist press is actually obscuring the fact that the EFF's policies are being subjected to a systematic process of dilution. It has been watered down from the red revolutionary anti-capitalist pre-election campaign rhetoric to the distinctly pink, reformist language of a party that wants to portray itself as more "responsible". Its first act, upon taking up its seats in the national assembly was to jettison its commitment not to accept the creature comforts of parliamentary salaries and benefits using the spurious argument that the policy was meant to take effect only if they had won the elections.

It has followed that betrayal by "clarifying" its nationalisation policy. The EFF no longer stands for the wholesale nationalisation of the banks; it is in favour of a state bank leaving intact the domination of the SA economy by its most parasitic sector. It wants workers to be given a stake in private companies not to expropriate them.

The EFF is increasingly seeking not to abolish capitalism, but to find an accommodation within it. This explains the logic of its R4,500 minimum wage demand, a figure adjusted to suit the ap-

tites of capital. It explains its appeals at the JSE for business to sponsor education. It accounts for the abandonment of its policy of nationalisation of the banks, the mines and the factories in sharp contrast to their agreement with WASP in the talks about possible electoral cooperation which they initiated and scuppered when they failed to persuade us to liquidate ourselves politically. The EFF had then fully agreed with WASP on nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under the democratic control and management of the working class.

The stridency of the EFF's radical anti-capitalist rhetoric conceals the reality that its policy is to create the conditions for the more rapid development of a black capitalist class. In that sense it shares the same historical aims as the ANC. Its policies reflect the frustrations of the emergent black capitalist class over the continued crushing domination of the economy by white monopoly capital after more than two decades of democracy. Malema repeatedly cites the fact that only around 10% of the JSE is owned by blacks as a prime example of the ANC's failure to redistribute wealth concentrated in white hands during the apartheid era. Just as the Nationalist Party used the state under apartheid to develop an Afrikaner bourgeoisie, so too, the EFF seeks to accelerate the development of a black bourgeoisie.

Yet without the policy it has now abandoned - nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy -- it will not be possible to expropriate the R1.5 trillion that lies idle in corporate bank accounts, nor to seize the R1.8 trillion held by the Public Investment Corporation for the benefit of capital, nor to arrest the wholesale pillage of the country's resources by foreign and domestic corporations through capital flight -- legal and illegal. This would require a full frontal confrontation with capital, something the EFF is more clearly signalling as an assurance to capital it has no appetite for. The expropriation of the land is all that is left of the EFF's radicalism. But the logic of its policies on industry and the banks, which dominate agri-business, means in time that policy too must fall.

### **EFF fills the vacuum on the Left for now but...**

The phenomenon of the EFF was made possible by the development of a vacuum on the left of the political spectrum, opened up incrementally over the past two decades by the decline of the ANC into in effect a minority, rural party, enjoying the declining support of only 34% of the urban vote and overall only 35% of the eligible voting population but accentuated by the change in working class consciousness produced by the Marikana massacre.

Despite its spectacular electoral success, the EFF no more than matched Cope's 2009 vote despite the far more favourable conditions that prevailed in 2014 compared to 2009. The crisis in the ANC had reached the point where Zuma's personal and corruption scandals, his booing by the crowd at Mandela's memorial service in front of an international television audience had become so serious that consideration was given to Zuma not being on the ANC's election posters.

Amongst organised workers, there is a healthy class suspicion towards the EFF, not only because of the whiff of corruption that



**The United Front is paralysed, strangled by opposition from within the leadership to adopting socialism as the UF's guiding ideology putting it out of step with the ideological traditions of the union that gave birth to it. ... the UF has failed dismally to embed itself in or to provide leadership to and unite the masses in service delivery protests with the organised labour movement – its primary mandate.**

continues to swirl around its CIC Malema, who has become a millionaire, as one shop steward pointed out at Numsa's international political school, despite never having worked a day in his life, but it has limited appeal amongst the more politically educated, advanced workers who see it at best as a sjambok to punish the ANC.

But, in the short to medium term, it will not suffer the same fate as the right wing Cope. It remains to the left of the ANC. More importantly its life as the main left force will be prolonged by the contin-

ued absence of a mass workers' party. The birth of a workers party faces a number of serious obstacles. The United Front is paralysed, strangled by opposition from within the leadership to adopting socialism as the UF's guiding ideology putting it out of step with the ideological traditions of the union that gave birth to it. The UF leadership is uncertain about its attitude to the 2016 local government elections. Its leadership is inclined to take up not unworthy issues like the Secrecy Bill and the defence off Chapter 9 institutions but which are abstract to the masses involved in the daily struggle to survive. Consequently the UF has failed dismally to embed itself in or to provide leadership to and unite the masses in service delivery protests with the organised labour movement – its primary mandate.

The workers' party is enduring an elephantine pregnancy within Numsa in an ongoing but unresolved debate on whether it should be a vanguard or a mass party. These factors, combined with the fact that other than Numsa, the left forces in the Movement for Socialism have no mass base, as well as the ideological and organisational incoherence between the UF, Movement for Socialism and UF - will continue to leave the EFF as the sole occupant of the political Left field for the foreseeable future.

But as the explosive uprising of the students has shown, the historical process towards a mass workers party will find other avenues, if the road through Numsa remains blocked by a leadership that mistakenly seems to believe that it has its hands on the clock of history.

### **Mass workers party on a socialist programme needed**

Politics like nature abhors a vacuum, if it is not fulfilled by progressive content it will be filled by reaction like the "xenophobic" outbreaks in 2008 and this year have shown. The student uprising inflicted on the ANC its most humiliating defeat since it came to power. It put the labour movement to shame by achieving for outsourced workers what organised labour has failed miserably to. The student uprising has the potential to give new impetus towards a workers party. For such a party to succeed in uniting the working class across all three main theatres of struggle – service delivery protests, student protests and the struggle of the organised working class – and to provide a real alternative to a capitalism undergoing its worst crisis since the 1930s, it would have to recognise that capitalism cannot be reformed, it has to be abolished. For this it would need a red-blooded socialist programme. ▲

# Nato Provocation: Turkey's downing of the Russian Su-24 fighter jet Socialist Fight 26-11-2015

Russia strongly denies any violation of Turkish airspace whatsoever and the surviving pilot has testified that they did not cross it. If we accept the validity of the Turkish map opposite it would have taken a maximum of 20 seconds to cross what is estimated at about five kilometres of Turkish territory. How then could they have issued ten warnings times over five minutes?

And the Turkish warplane would have had to get permission from its base to fire the sidewinder missiles long before it was over Turkish territory, if we accept that it did violate the airspace. Either Turkey had decided to down the plane when it was about 50 miles from its own border in order to shoot it down over its territory or it shot down the plane after it crossed back into Syria. This is a simple analysis of the uncorroborated data supplied by Turkey itself. Moreover Turkey itself thinks nothing of violating Iraqi and Syrian airspace; they have done it several hundred times in the past months with the tacit approval of the US.

The real reason for the shooting down of the jet must be found in the overall geostrategic and political conflicts in the area. In the first place let us assert that the overall strategic orientation of US imperialism has not changed despite the obligation of the US and EU country to take cognisance of public opinion in its foreign wars adventures after Vietnam 1975 and their failure to achieve decisive results in Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya. Despite regime change and bombing the infrastructure of these lands back to the Middle Ages they have not managed to secure stable pro-imperialist puppet regimes. Regime change in Iraq has very frustratingly strengthened Iran, another of their targets for regime change. And they haven't even yet managed to secure regime change in Syria.

And that remains a vital part of the strategic goal of USA foreign policy. Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the two major backers of IS and the other jihadist reactionaries like the Al Qaeda affiliate, the Al Nusrah Front, have been miffed with all the talk from Secretary of State John Kerry and UK Prime Minister David Cameron about agreement with Russia. This was supposed to allow Assad to remain in power for a temporary transitional period (which obviously could

be extended indefinitely) while IS was defeated in a joint bombing campaign and agreement was reached with the 'moderates' (who include the 'moderate' Sharia-law jihadists and the almost invisible Free

Syrian Army of the Southern Front). The talk was designed to mollify domestic public opinion and allow doubting pro-imperialist politicians (remember Claire Short?) to vote for air strikes, whip up a



'Falklands Factor' of national chauvinism after the Paris Massacre and deal a major blow to Jeremy Corbyn at the same time.

But the contradictions were too great for the plan to work, despite the eagerness of Putin to go along with it; Russia even cited the much-loved Stalinist nostalgic epoch of gross class collaboration in the

name of anti-fascism that was the WWII alliance between Joe Stalin, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt. Bombing alone could not defeat IS, it needed ground troops and closing its supply lines from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey and economic lifeline of oil exports to Turkey. Sending in US troops in any numbers was far too politically risky; that left two forces that could conceivably do the job, the Syrian Kurds and Assad's army.

The Syrian Kurds of the YPG and their PKK allies will not venture too far outside their own territory even as far as Raqqa. And they are politically unreliable allies, they co-operated with Assad when it suited them and they were very upset with the US for sanctioning the Turkish air strikes against them and preventing them from moving west of the Euphrates to link up with the Kurdish enclave around Afrin in the west. The US bombing campaign NEVER bomb IS when it is fighting the Syrian army, lest it assist his survival. And only recently under pressure from public opinion generated by Russian bombing have the US begun to bomb the oil trucks taking IS crude to Turkey. They have justified avoided hitting these very obvious targets which would cut most of the economic lifeline for IS by ridiculously citing their concern for 'civilian casualties', who are not the dehumanising 'collateral damage' when it suits the western mass media. Please...

Speaking in Manila on 19 November at the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit Obama made it clear that he would not end his support for the Syrian 'rebels' while Assad was still in power. He recognised Islamic State as a "serious threat" but Russia's efforts in Syria were aimed at propping up Assad so that was a great problem. "Bottom line is, I do not foresee a situation in which we can end the civil war in Syria while Assad remains in power," he said.

Taken together with his support for Turkish bombing of the Kurds to keep open the IS crossing point at Jarabulus for their international jihadist fighters including Chechens it is clear that Obama via the CIA and Special Forces on the ground still tacitly supports IS, although he cannot say so publicly. And therefore all the talk of the big rifts between the US and Turkey and Saudi Arabia are just temporary problems. The downing of the war plane has gone a long way to sorting out these problems.

Turkey downed the Russian fighter jet because it was hitting the jihadist fighters who guarded the supply lines to the Al Nusrah Front here as the USA tacitly guarded the IS supply lines at Jarabulus. And because Russia was bombing the oil convoys to Turkey. And the US had at least tacitly indicated that that the action was ok. Russia and Assad are being told implicitly that there is a very strict limit to 'co-operation'. ▲



# The Paris Massacre: Imperialism's chickens coming home to roost

French and Global imperialism's assault on Afghanistan the Middle East and North Africa bear the ultimate responsibility for the Paris Massacre Social-ist Fight statement on the Paris Massacre 17-11-2015

Socialist Fight condemns utterly the barbaric terrorist action carried out on Friday 13 November in Paris, which has left around 130 dead, and another 300 injured, 80 critically. These came only hours after other bloody actions targeting Shia Muslims in bombings in Beirut, where 41 died, and Baghdad, where 26 were killed.

We condemn these actions as bloody crimes against the French, Middle Eastern and international working class, and indeed the civilian populations more generally. We extend our profound condolence, sympathy and solidarity to the families and friends of the murdered victims and the wounded.

As Marxists we are totally opposed to methods of individual terrorism however 'anti-imperialist' the motivation of the perpetrators may be. The inevitable consequences of this is civilian casualties, intended or not. And the attack never weakens imperialism, it ALWAYS strengthens the repressive forces of the capitalist state against the working class and its aspiring revolutionary leadership.

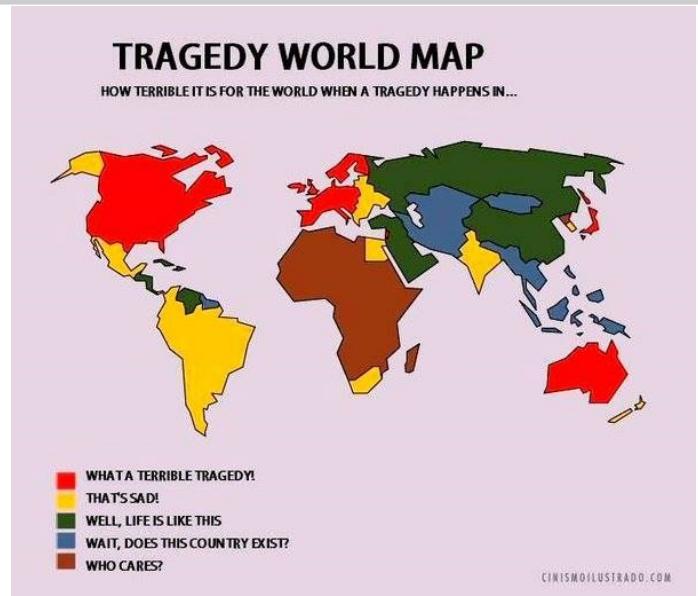
This attack in Paris is qualitatively worse than the Charlie Hebdo massacre in January because however misguided that was at least it was against targeted victims who they held to be in some manner, however distorted, responsible for the wars in the Middle East and North Africa. This attack was for openly reactionary motives specifically targeting defenceless civilians which can only result in increased Islamophobia and repression of the entire working class and further moves towards a police state.

## The value of the lives of imperialist and third world citizens contrasted

It cannot go without note in the semi-colonial world how great a value imperialist powers like the USA, Britain and France places on the lives of their own mainly white citizens compared to their almost casual disregard for the mass killings of citizens of oppressed nations. The massive outrage and subsequent wars by the USA after 9/11, Britain after 7/7 and the French reaction to the Paris Massacre by mass bombing of Raqqa must be contrasted in the third world to the casual and patronisingly contemptuous mere note made of the hundreds of thousands dead in Muslim lands.

The Paris Massacre is just the latest in a series of horrific massacres in 2015 against 'soft targets' by Islamic State (IS) forces in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Kenya, Libya and Nigeria; civilians and ethnic minorities, including women and children randomly chosen to spread terror. These killings in 2015 alone include the following major massacres of 'soft targets': Boko Haram sent suicide bombers and massacred with AK47s against random soft targets in Nigeria and neighbouring countries; in Nigeria on 3-7 January up to 2,000 were murdered in Baga, 91 murdered on 4-5 February in Fotokol, and 145 in Maiduguri. Al Shabbaab massacred 147 in Garissa, Kenya on 1 April. IS massacred ethnic minorities and leftist opponents randomly over the year; 137 in Sana'a, Yemen on 20 March, 233 in Kobanî on 25-28 June in a revenge attack after they had been driven out by the Kurdish YPG, 130 in a market-place suicide bombing in Khan Bani Saad, Iraq, 102 in Ankara on 10 October and 224 in the downing of the Russian plane in Sinai on 31 October. There are scores of suicide bombings and massacres by IS and its affiliates that took more than 20 and less than 100 lives throughout this year.

Moreover it must be noted that those killed by Islamic State and its numerous declared affiliates in the Middle East and North Africa is but a very small fraction of those killed by imperialism itself in



its invasions and mass bombings and drone assassinations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan and Syria. Sanctions caused a million Iraqis deaths between the First Gulf War in 1991 (including those half a million dead Iraqi children for whom Madeline Albright had such contempt) and the 2003 invasion, another million dead following Shock and Awe. And add to this the related proxy wars by US imperialist clients like Saudi Arabia's mass bombing of Yemen and the civil war in Somalia. These are all products of imperialist interventions and divide and rule tactics of supporting one ethnic or religious group against another to foster conflict the easier to assert their domination. This old tactic of the British Empire frequently results in failed states but at least from imperialism's point of view it removes more powerful organised opponents like Gadhafi and Saddam.

## The nature of Islamic State

Responsibility for the Paris atrocities has been claimed by the self-styled caliphate of Islamic State. The actions in the Middle East are characteristic of IS; there is no reason to disbelieve the claim about Paris, despite their statement containing only perfunctory detail of the events, consistent with media accounts. This fits in with the secretive cell structures that are likely to be the way IS combatants organise abroad – the centre would not know the operative details.

The fanatical self-styled caliphate is in a category of its own even in terms of Islamist groups in the Middle East. A splinter from the Al Qaeda movement founded by Osama bin Laden, it has outgrown its parent and now controls a major chunk of territory both in Iraq and Syria, as well as the allegiance of forces even as far away as Nigeria. Its claim to the caliphate gives it a wider appeal to a layer of youth of immigrant background, often second or third generation, who are outraged by imperialist crimes in conflicts such as Iraq and Palestine, and looking for ways to take revenge.

Such bloody attacks do nothing to avenge the crimes committed by imperialism. On the contrary, they provide an excuse and an opportunity for new massive atrocities by the same imperialists. The leaders of IS are not so much purely religious fanatics as the propagators of counterrevolutionary despair. Their actions in imperialist countries such as France are designed to destroy the possibility of collaboration and merging of alienated Muslim youth with the left and the workers' movement to fight imperialism, in favour

of provoking anti-Muslim bigotry and even pogroms, the better to corral more Muslim people into their camp on the basis of despair at any progressive change. Thus from the point of view of anti-imperialists, the actions of IS are utterly reactionary.

That does not exhaust the question however. The left and the workers' movements in Europe have to fight, as a matter of great urgency, against the further attacks on Muslims that are in the pipeline, and to defend democratic rights more generally, against intensified police state measures that right-wing forces will take the opportunity to push through. We must firmly oppose renewed attacks on refugees and other migrants, as the xenophobes and racists are already exploiting the Paris events. And we still have the duty to oppose renewed imperialist interventions in the Middle East, including against IS, defending the targets of imperialist attacks. In fact, this will be true especially against IS, as this is where the pressure to intervene will come from most of all.

Thus the response of France's 'socialist' President Hollande has been to promise a renewed war against terrorism. Even in bourgeois strategic terms, this is incoherent, as IS is quite obviously the product of previous 'wars against terrorism'. In fact, over the last couple of years, the imperialist bombing of IS has undoubtedly strengthened IS itself.

IS is the product of imperialist barbarism. It is a petty-bourgeois Islamic radical movement that became a mass, ultra-radicalised force precisely because of the horrendous destruction visited upon Sunni Arab Iraq by the US invasion forces from 2003. In particular, it is the product of Bush's 'surge' in 2004-5 when the core of the Sunni resistance in Fallujah and Ramadi, often led by former Ba'athist soldiers, and acting as part of an anti-colonial rebellion across sectarian lines with Sunni rebels in Najaf and Karbala, were brutally pulverised, including with radioactive weapons, by US forces.

The germ of IS was created then out of the forces originally involved in the Iraqi Al Qaeda movement. It grew into a formidable force as a result of gaining space to grow in the vacuum created by Assad's loss of control in Syria. Finally, in early 2014 it signalled its real power to the world by taking control of Iraq's second city, Mosul, and building a proto-state that obliterated the Sykes-Picot line, the artificial border between Syria and Iraq created by British and French colonialism in the context of WWI.

IS is an unusual force, in that it originated through the extreme barbarism of its opponents, and it feeds off that. Thus if anything, the imperialist attacks on it since Sept 2014 have strengthened it. Its militants do not fear death, and their bloody-minded self-sacrifice is attractive to others enraged by imperialist crimes. It is a product of the imperialist policy, instrumental for Zionism, of demolishing all and every regime in the Arab\Muslim Middle East able to stand up to Israel.

But in IS they have inadvertently brought into being something far tougher and more dangerous to them, something that bears more than a passing resemblance to the Khmer Rouge, the ultra-radicalised excrescence of a previous barbaric imperialist obliteration of an entire subjugated country. IS has had the skill to manipulate the Sunni-Shia antagonism in the Middle East and has gained some funding and support from regimes such as Saudi Arabia and



A rose was placed in a bullet hole in a restaurant window with a note reading: "In the name of what?"

Turkey, but it is independent of them and has its own base.

Even Russian intervention in Syria does not seem to have seriously damaged it; it has though succeeded in causing some real pain to Russia through recently bringing down a Russian airliner full of tourists, travelling home from the Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Shaikh. And such actions as the US drone strike apparently killing 'Jihadi John', its British spokesman and head-chopper, will not damage it significantly, as its militants welcome 'martyrdom'.

Indeed, the only force in the region that has had any real success in combatting IS has been the Kurdish Workers Party

(PKK) of Turkish Kurdistan and its allies in Syria, the YPG. This is largely because the PKK/YPG do have some real, radical quasi-revolutionary elements in their politics. The appearance of women fighters and the prominent position given to women in general in the struggle by the YPG stands in sharp contrast to all the Islamacist forces in the region and is an inspiring feature of their politics. This does mean however that they are feared by some of the local regimes more than IS itself. The Turkish regime, for instance, fears Kurdish radicals more than IS, and though it is supposed to be as a NATO member at war with IS it spends more effort bombing PKK/YPG supporters than IS. Moreover the PKK/YPG is fighting IS as allies of the USA, who provided the air cover for their defence of Kobane and the taking of Sinjar on 13 November. Here the echoes of the Kurdish civil war reverberated with Barzani's forces entering the town from the east and claiming it for his Kurdistan and the PKK/YPG forces claiming they had done the majority of the fighting, according to the New York Times on 13 November:

"We have been fighting in this city for 15 months," said a fighter who went by the nom de guerre Adil Haroon, explaining that the P.K.K. had come to the Yazidis' aid immediately after the IS takeover in August 2014, as the pesh merga were leaving. "We fought. They don't fight. Now they say that we should leave. They were with us when we took the city but didn't bother to get out of their cars."

It seems that imperialism's manoeuvrings between Barzani, the YPG and the PKK may yet come unstuck once the fighters in the ranks of the YPG and PKK realise the price they will be expected to pay for US 'cooperation'.

### Conclusion

All this is what produces the extreme reaction that is Islamic State; these bombings are imperialist chickens coming home to roost; "your lives are as cheap to us as ours are to you" is the intended message from IS. The Paris massacre has had no effect on the global stock exchanges, it poses no threat to imperialism itself and its global domination and international finance capitalists are well aware of that.

This does point to the only way to defeat IS politically. Only an alternative revolutionary force, with a programme of overturning the imperialist order, and its puppets and clients throughout the region, can challenge IS politically.

The PKK et al, with their radical nationalism for Kurds only (though their nationhood and aspirations for their own state is a just cause which we support), are too narrow for this. It will take the creation and growth of a real internationalist communist party to politically defeat IS and lead struggles in a genuinely progressive direction in the Middle East. ▲

# Imperialism and the Paris Massacre: the “something must be done” cynical fraud

**How Cameron cynically uses the ‘can’t think, won’t think’ brigade and the right wing philistines suffering from post-empire stress disorder to pursue his agenda of becoming chief bag handler to the US again**

By Steve McKenzie

Socialist Fight is pleased to publish this analysis of the situation in Syria and its effects on the domestic politics in Britain by comrade Steve. We do not agree that Russia is an imperialist country in the Marxist sense of the term nonetheless the growing collaboration between Putin and the West in Syria and Ukraine exposes once again the reactionary character of this national bourgeoisie of Stalinist origins. Part of aim of the bombing is to forge an alliance with the West and become their junior partner. This will not defend the sovereignty of Syria and will allow finance capital and their transnationals to penetrate the whole area without opposition, their strategic aim all along. Without conceding our anti imperialist united front stance we must stress the appeal working class in the region and in the imperialist countries to unite for the programme of Permanent Revolution. 23-11-2015

In the wake of the Paris, Sharm El Sheikh, Beirut, Baghdad and Ankara atrocities, committed against civilians, who were deliberately targeted by IS, the key question that is clearly in most people's minds in the immediate aftermath is what is to be done? The utter annihilation of the Bush and Blair love child IS is what most people want to see and the fact that bombing alone will not end violent terrorist activity but only intensify it and provide new recruits for IS in the future doesn't even enter the equation. The something must be done mood that is gripping the masses is being cynically manipulated by the ruling elites and their politicians.

Despite the fact that simply bombing plays into the hands of the fundamentalist monsters and the Russian and Iranian backed Assad regime, the natural gut reaction of something must be done is being cynically exploited by both the right and the left of the British establishment, for their own narrow self-interest and the self-interest of those pulling their strings as is the case in Russia, France and everywhere else.

The same British politicians whose lick spitting, grovelling and bag handling to US imperialism has helped fuel the conflicts that are raging around the world today. However, regardless of the crimes against humanity that US imperialism and British imperialism, in terminal decline, have perpetuated in the past, including the invasion of Iraq in 2003, that gave birth to this stone age monstrosity IS, or the fact that bombing IS alone, would not end but intensify terrorist attacks on civilian targets in future, the reaction remains, something must be done, and those really pulling the strings are attempting to manipulate this mood in pursuit of their own agendas

What will be done is that western and Russian imperialism will continue to pursue their own goals of conquering power and influence in this region through their allies and their proxies. With very few allies on the ground at all, it doesn't take a political genius to see who is going to come out on top here. Russia and Iran will clearly be the winners, extending their influence in Iraq and linking up with their ally in Syria Bashar al Assad. Despite their military might the arrogance and ignorance of US led western imperialism has put itself in an incredibly weak position. Putin's call for a coalition of international forces (of which Britain would be part), that will degrade IS in Syria and Iraq is a master stroke in the degenerate sphere of international diplomacy. After the intense aerial bombardment of the combined air forces of Russia, America, France and Britain et al, will soften IS up for the ground forces to administer the coup de grace. The ground forces in Syria will be the Syrian army, Hezbollah, the Afghan and Pakistan Shia militia and elite units of the Iranian revolutionary guard. In Iraq it will be the Iranian backed Iraqi forces and the Shia militias who will not



War devastated Syria with over 250,000 dead will not be helped by more imperialist bombing

need much support from Iran or from anyone else. The reality is that this is what is already happening at the moment without the involvement of Biggles and wing commander Cameron.

The very real question will then be what will the US do having been completely outmanoeuvred again by Russia who will have effectively secured this entire region under theirs and Iran's sphere of influence. The consequences of the, 'something must be done' bombing, that has helped bring this entire situation about in the first instance, will inevitably be; will western imperialism be prepared to sit back and be frozen out with a Shia dominated Syria and Iraq grateful to Russia and Iran with Assad still in control in Syria. Will they retaliate, could they make any significant moves, or will they just be left looking ludicrous again like they did when Russia annexed the Crimea. The supplementary question will be what action Sunni controlled Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States (who have backed IS to the hilt), take to put pressure on the US to prevent that happening and what action would Israel take to put pressure on the US, including unilateral action.

It is against this backdrop that in Britain Prime Minister Cameron, in a display of moral prostitution and utter hypocrisy, cynically uses the ‘can’t think, won’t think’ brigade and the right wing philistines suffering from post-empire stress disorder who have been mobilised by the Paris atrocities who are insisting that something must be done, to pursue the blind alley of attempting to re-impose western interest in this region of the middle east.

He knows full well that the RAF joining in the bombing campaign makes not one jot of difference to the military situation. To bomb or not to bomb is purely a political question. In reality Cameron's dual objectives are to restore Britain's role as bag handler in chief to the US by supporting their insane and counterproductive bombing campaign and to discredit Jeremy Corbyn and everything he stands for. He has received rabid support from both wings of the British establishment, the right and the pseudo left, (Liberal) media. Tory MPs in both the Tory and Labour party and no doubt the military top brass and other elements who really run the show outside of the democratic facade that is parliament.

These well healed reckless criminal maniacs whose actions have created this situation in the first place will press on in pursuit of their own narrow agendas regardless of the fact that bombing from a great height without having boots on the ground is militarily illiterate and can and will achieve nothing and the boots on the ground will not be western imperialism's but Russian imperialism's allies.

This appears to be of secondary importance to Cameron and the upper class oiks of the Bullingdon club who are currently administering Britain on behalf of the ruling class. As stated their dual objective is to become chief bag handler to the US again and to take out the left wing anti austerity socialist leadership of the Labour party. The totally dishonest argument that the Labour party policy of no military action without a UN mandate would mean outsourcing British security to a Russian veto is disingenuous in the extreme. As if Russia would decline air support to degrade IS making the job of their allies on the ground much easier. This is not to support Russian imperialisms objectives but just to highlight the dishonesty of Cameron's position and the ludicrous path he is attempting to take the country down based on the revulsion felt at these terrorist attacks.

Unfortunately Jeremy failed to exploit these outbursts in any meaningful way at all. Failure to do this coupled with the ferocious establishment attacks on him (the BBC's notorious Laura Kuenssberg asking the question of whether he would support a shoot to kill policy rapidly followed by frenzied and unprincipled hacks in the extreme right wing British press and the Vichy left establishment screaming that the Paris attackers wouldn't be taken out etc. etc.). The disgusting Sun headline 'Jihadi Jez' and other such filth, coupled with the outrageous attacks of the opportunists in the parliamentary Labour party makes it fairly clear that this is the issue, this is the

## Who backs ISIS and how

<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	2006: directed by Washington to create the Islamic State of Iraq (al Qaeda) to prevent Iraq getting close to Iran. 2011: armed the Islamist insurrection in Daraa, Syria. Financed and armed almost all the armed Islamists in Syria, maintaining divisions to limit their independent power.
<b>Turkey</b>	Enabled safe passage for foreign Islamists to pass into northern Syria. With Saudi Arabia, created a Jabhat al Nusra (al Qaeda) led 'Army of Conquest' to invade north Syria in 2015. Hosts the Islamist leadership. Coordinates sale of Syrian oil stolen by ISIS. Medical treatment for ISIS.
<b>Qatar</b>	2011-2013: Put billions of dollars into Muslim Brotherhood linked Islamist groups, like Farouq (FSA). After 2013 Qatar has backed the 'Army of Conquest' coalition and the Turkish-Saudi axis.
<b>Israel</b>	Supply of arms and medical treatment to all Islamist fighters in Syria, including Nusra and ISIS. Coordination points at Golan border.
<b>UK &amp; France</b>	Supply arms to 'rebel' Islamists, who work closely with the al Qaeda groups, systematically joining and delivering arms to them.
<b>USA</b>	Directs and coordinates all of the above, making use of military bases in Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Arms 'Syrian rebels' which then defect to ISIS. Pushes ISIS away from Kurdish areas but lets them attack Syria. Iraqi officials say the US directly supplies ISIS by air drops.

For documentation of these facts see the forthcoming book: 'The Dirty War on Syria', by Tim Anderson.

groundwork to undermine Jeremy and that the parliamentary coup is fast approaching.

Once more her majesty's loyal opposition will be her majesty's LOYAL opposition capable of balancing the books and keeping a relatively orderly state of affairs if indeed it is necessary for the second eleven to have a turn at the crease in the palace of Westminster at some stage in the future.

The key will be if the more serious elements who have witnessed this process will draw the conclusion that so called parliamentary democracy is nothing but a facade. While it would be childish not to participate

in parliamentary politics it would be entirely inane to harbour illusions that real power resides there and significant change can be achieved through this facade. A genuine socialist movement based on a clear understanding of the class nature of society, an understanding of the exploitative and dishonest machinations of capitalist society must be built. A determination to end this economic obscenity that is the individualistic greed and selfishness and cut throat competition that is capitalism. Replacing it with a socialist society based on planning and co-operation.

Therefore taking control of the real levers of power which is the banks and financial institutions and the means of production and communication and not expecting anything much through parliament is the key issue if the real democratic control of the 99% and not the autocratic control of the 1% is ever to become a reality. ▲

## Marxist World Splits from the CWI

Socialist Fight welcomes the left split of Marxist World (MW) from the Committee for a Workers International (CWI). On 3 November a group of comrades led by Steve Dobbs and Bruce Wallace split from the CWI sections in Britain. They have been denigrated by the CWI as 'only two' to marginalise them and the political significance of the issues on which they fought. They say the "we split from the Socialist Party/CWI partly with regret" but they were making no headway in the political battle within the CWI because of its bureaucratic structures and some of their earlier supporters had left the SP but remained within the Marxist World, the name of the new group, the new journal due out in January and their website.

Moreover the two central issues on which they split; the Marxist Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (LTRPF) against Keynesian economics and the assertion of the need to rediscover genuine democratic centralism are absolutely vital questions for the future of revolutionary Trotskyism. The rejection of the TUSC 'party front' formations is also an important advance.

The LTRPF is central to the reform vs. revolution approach not only to our ultimate goal, the overthrow of capitalism on the planet, but also the method with which we fight for that aim. Also the struggle for genuine Democratic Centralism vs. the Bureaucratic Centralism that prevailed in the SLL/WRP, the IS/SWP and Grant-

ism in all its forms is vital. The Mandel/FI tradition has a better position on internal democracy but we can criticise its operation too. Its absence was blatantly obvious in the splits in the SWP over Marin Smith's abuse of young female comrade. We hope you do establish a "seething internal democracy" as Trotsky described the internal regime of the Bolsheviks.

Open minority and majority position should not only be allowed but encouraged to plumb the depths of political problems and not sweep them under the carpet.

This should be possible on all issues with the proviso that all members must actively support the majority programme once an activity is decided upon and engaged in; opponents should not then publicly undermine it. For instance Zinoviev publicly supported the second revolution in 1917 until the date of the insurrection was decided although he did not really agree with it. When he and Kamenev publicly opposed and revealed the date of the insurrection this put the party in big danger. This was an open break of DC and Lenin wanted to expel them both for that.

Socialist Fight has argued with the comrades in the past that the whole history of post-war Trotskyism needs reassessing and that Grantism was no more genuine Trotskyism than was Healyism, Mandelism, Cliffism or Grantism. If Healyism was an objectivist workerist catastrophism Mandelism was a petty bourgeois movementist substi-

tutionalism for the working class, Cliffism was a state capitalist capitulation to petty-bourgeois public opinion over the defence of the nationalised property relations in USSR because of the crimes of Stalinism and Grantism was semi-reformist on the question of the state and state forces. It boils down to a left version of the CPGB's British Road to Socialism with the working class wheeled out as a stage army to defend the socialist revolution won in the chamber of a bourgeois parliament via Enabling Acts etc. Its not just economic reformism that is the problem but the disastrous 1973 Allende Stalinist/reformist perspectives that flows from it. The state forces are the bastion of counterrevolution not workers in uniform.

However we acknowledge this is a leftist and very progressive split. We are pleased with the far better attitude to the election of Jeremy Corbyn, the acknowledgement that Labour remained a bourgeois-workers' party, the willingness to engage in the new forms of political struggle opening up in a democratising Labour party and we hope that many opportunities will present themselves for joint united front work in Momentum and the Labour Representation Committee between them and progressive grouping like Socialist Labour and Labour Party Marxists.

There are many ex CWI members in the Labour party who can be won if clear tactics of work within Labour are adopted. ▲

## Extracts from the MW Split Document and Where We Stand

### Marxist World – Who We Are

A struggle within the Socialist Party of England and Wales and Socialist Party Scotland (both part of the Committee for a Workers International) started nearly two years ago over Marxist theory, which soon led to a questioning of the ideas held by the leadership.

Two members, Steve Dobbs and Bruce Wallace, were declared “indefinitely suspended” by the CWI leadership in 2014 for spurious apolitical reasons, but in reality were expelled (in all but name) for raising Marxist ideas and challenging the wisdom of the Socialist Party Executive Committee – namely Peter Taaffe and Lynn Walsh.

### Our criticism of the Socialist Party Executive Committee

.In brief, our criticisms of the Socialist Party EC are:

They reject that declining profit rates were behind the 2007/8 crisis and subsequent Great Recession, and instead hide behind a “multi-causal” explanation of capitalist crisis. This is a reflection of capitalist economic theory that is based on under-consumptionism (“lack of demand”) and Keynesian ideas. They reject the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (LTRPF) which forms an integral part of Marx’s theory as outlined in Volume 3 of Capital.

This under-consumptionist theory marries up with a reformist, Keynesian solution to the crisis in order to “increase demand”, which is also promoted in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN).

The Keynesian programme also attempts to align the party with the official full-time Trade Union leadership and win influence with them, instead of building a clear socialist, rank and file alternative to the TU-bureaucracy.

Their reformist attitude to the capitalist state, such that a parliamentary party can bring about socialism through a Keynesian spending programme.

The undemocratic leadership style of the So-

cialist Party, which we understand as bureaucratic centralism, and lack of genuine democratic centralism. We believe that open democratic debate is healthy and essential within any revolutionary Party in order for the membership to keep the leadership in check, to educate members and raise the theoretical level of the entire organisation. We also reject the slate system in this context, which tends to reproduce the leadership in its own image without challenges.

We reject the current “dual strategy” of simultaneously building a reformist Party and a revolutionary Party. In practice, the former takes places at the expense of the latter, which paves the way for watering-down of Marxist ideas.

Furthermore, we reject the notion that the Labour Party is a bourgeois party, no different to the Conservatives. Whilst the direction of the Labour Party was certainly towards an American style Democratic Party, this process of bourgeoisification did not complete, and in fact is beginning to reverse under Corbyn at this time. We regard the Labour Party as a bourgeois-workers Party, and therefore regard the idea of building another reformist electoral Party, such as TUSC, as a mistake.

...It must be conceded that, from its inception, Militant did not have a genuine approach to democratic-centralism. The bureaucratic-centralist organisational model that exists in the Socialist Party was, fundamentally, in Militant as well...

The only difference was that, in carrying out an entryist strategy in the Labour Party under extremely hostile conditions where Militant had to formally deny they even existed as a group, there were only limited opportunities for open discussion, with members accepting the need for a high degree of centralism to defend the organisation. This was exploited by the leadership of Militant to impose their bureaucratic-centralist system.

...In our view, this accelerated the opportunist and reformist trajectory of the leaderships of both factions abandoning many Marxist positions over the preceding period. It should be noted that the vast majority of our criticisms of the



Socialist Party EC are equally applicable to Socialist Appeal, who hold an under-consumptionist position on the cause of crisis and maintain the same bureaucratic-centralist leadership style.

### Where We Stand

We make it clear that we would be willing to work within or join any revolutionary organisation that adheres to the fundamental ideas of Marxism as we’ve previously defended, whilst guaranteeing genuine democratic centralist rights and faction rights for members based on democratic open discussion and unity in specific actions.

As we are unaware such an organisation currently exists, we are in favour of building an independent revolutionary Party. We do not claim to be a Party at this stage. We seek to reach the leftward moving youth, particularly in the wake of Corbyn’s victory to Labour leadership, and those Marxists who have come to reject the bureaucratic methods of the so-called Trotskyist parties.

Next year we will be producing a hard-copy journal, in addition to more regular updates on the website, to help propagate Marxist ideas and encourage debate and discussion within the workers movement. The rebuilding of genuine Marxism will not be an easy task, but we encourage all those interested to contact us and join us in our mission to forge a new class-struggle organisation based on razor sharp theory and practice.

**Marxist World** <http://marxistworld.net/> ▲

From back page marginalised and a tutor put a red mark through a quote I used from him writing , “I don’t agree with your source” across it. The world expert on 17th century England was dismissed as a discredited leftist.

But it was the 20<sup>th</sup> century that was the worst. Germany was to blame for WWI, we were supposed to believe and explanations about equal culpability among competing empires we pooh-hoed. Our tutor, John, who had been in *The Militant*, warned us not to do the question on the Holocaust if it came up. I got an inkling of why he was warning us when Ian Kershaw, professor at the University of Sheffield and author of volumes on the life of Hitler, appeared at a Channel 4 programme where I was in the audience.

I noted he had not mentioned the German Labour movement at all and focussed his speech on Hitler’s hatred of the Jews as the explanation of how he came to power. I questioned this, were not the first victims the trade union leaders

and the working class parties? Surely it was smashing the organised working class that prepared the Holocaust? Indeed no, the Zionist minder by his side assured the audience. The Jews were the target all along, it had nothing to do with the working class, these leaders were only sent to concentration camps, the Jews were sent to death camps.

I could not resist the Holocaust question in the exam and I failed that very badly. Basically you were meant to balance your answer between the proposition that all Germans were aware of and approved of the Holocaust and the idea that it was the responsibility of the Nazi state. This was posed by reliance on Daniel Goldhagen theses in *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* that a particular death squad, Reserve Police Battalion 101, who exterminated Jews, did it eagerly and willingly and had no need of encouragement from Hitler. They were just evil bastards and that was that.

I quoted from Norman Finkelstein’s *A Nation on Trial* and followed his lines of argument,

which I had studied in detail, in systematically destroying Goldhagen’s outlandish reactionary arguments. You were supposed to give due weight to racism and not attempt to destroy their arguments. Those who praise the scholarship of Finkelstein’s work, and that of his co-author Ruth Bettina Birn, include Eric Hobsbawm, Arno Mayer and Ian Kershaw.

The marking regime, which tutor John was aware of and so warned against, was surely guided by that Zionist minder who stood beside Kershaw during the Chanel 4 lecture.

Finkelstein expressed amazement to me that Kershaw had allowed himself to be politically dominated by the reactionary Zionist man but I think that the essence of Ian Donovan’s thesis on Zionism was there on display, not just Zionist money but the guilt tripping over the Holocaust that gives Zionism the narrative that fitted the rightist agenda of the late Professor Arthur Marwick of the Open University and western bourgeois society in general. ▲

